SHORT ANSWERS

TO

Common Objections Against Religion

BY

SEGUR

EDITED BY

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IN

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Author's Preface

HERE is a little book, which I have written expressly for you, my dear reader. It will displease you, perhaps, at first sight; allow me, nevertheless, to offer it to you; for that is a sure sign that you particularly need it.

A good book, they say, is a friend.

I hope, whatever you may think of it, that I now present to you one of those very friends. Receive it as one's friends should be received, with kindness, and an open heart. I offer it to you in the same way.

Although this friend speaks of rather serious things, I have every reason to believe that he will not tire you. I have strongly impressed this upon him, and he has promised not to *preach*, but simply to *talk* to you. After having read the last chapter, you shall see that he has kept his word.

You will remark, no doubt, that the prejudices to which I oppose an answer are of three kinds. Some spring from *impiety*, they are the worst; I have commenced with them; others spring from *ignorance;* others, again, from a kind of cowardice.

I hope the greater part of these objections are

unknown to you, and that you have never seriously entertained them.

I have, nevertheless, mentioned them, as a preservative for the future. It is the antidote which, by way of precaution, I give you beforehand.

I pray God that these simple conversations may do you good, that they may win your heart.

Having learned by a sweet experience that true happiness consists in knowing, loving, and serving God, I have no more ardent desire than to see my own happiness, which is so pure, so solid, become yours also.

The intention is good. That is something, above all in these times. Is the book itself good? I trust so, but I know my slender skill.

You will find, no doubt, many questions treated too briefly; but I have been afraid of tiring you, my dear reader, and I have chosen rather to be incomplete than to put you to sleep. Wo to the book one nods over!

As to this one, I advise you not to read too much of it at a time, but, nevertheless, *to read it through, from the beginning to the end.* Read with reflection, carefully weighing the reasons which I present to you. *I beg you, above all, conscientiously and honestly to seek the truth,* not to reject it, if it present itself to your mind. When the heart is upright and sincere, light breaks upon it very quickly.

Publisher's Preface

IT is sad to observe to what an extent belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the immortality of the soul, and even in a personal superintending Providence is fast disappearing from among the young men of our day who have been brought up under Protestant influences.

Are not some of our Catholic young men in danger of being carried away by this tide of infidelity? Can they escape entirely the baleful influences that surround them? Should they not be taught all that is necessary to preserve themselves, and be so fortified that their example and teaching would tend to arrest those false principles that are fraught with so much danger to the well-being of society? To effect this, good books are certainly useful; and we know of no book better fitted for this purpose than this admirable work of Segur. More than three hundred thousand copies of it have already been circulated.

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SHORT ANSWERS

TO

Objections Against Religion

FIRST OBJECTION.

WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH RELIGION? I HAVE NONE, AND THAT DOES NOT PREVENT MY ENJOYING EXCELLENT HEALTH. *

ANSWER. Accordingly, I do not offer it to you as a means of growing in height, or enjoying good health.

But, honestly, are we then in this world only for that; and have we no higher destiny than our oxen, our dogs, and our cats? All nations, in all times and places, have been convinced of the contrary, and it appears strange that you should be right, against the whole world.

It is about our higher destiny that religion is concerned. Nothing can touch us more closely;

* The author begins with the objection of the lowest kind of mere animal man.

nothing can better deserve the attention of a reasonable man.

In fact, according as religion is found true or false, every thing changes in the practical direction of our life, in our ideas, in our most intimate and most important sentiments.

Now, not only *is it possible* that religion is true, but there are many strong arguments in its favor, in the immense blessings of civilization which it has spread upon the earth, and in the respect which has been paid to it by so many men of every nation, eminent for their virtues and their genius, such as Bossuet, Fénelon, Saint Louis, Bayard, the great Condé, Napoleon, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis de Sales, Columbus, Sir Thomas More, Daniel O'Connell, Charles Carroll, and a host of others, whose names are familiar to our countrymen.

Let me, then, discuss the cause of religion with you.

Believe me, you reject it only because you do not know it. As you represent it to yourself, I can easily understand that it is distasteful to you. But do you represent religion to yourself as it really is? This is the whole question. Alas! what prejudices, what strange errors exist with regard to it!

It will not be difficult for me, my dear reader, in these simple conversations, to show you that these prejudices are unjust; that religion is not what its enemies say it is; that not only is it not absurd, but that it is supremely reasonable.

beautiful, and harmonious, and that it rests upon the most solid proofs.

I am going to show you that it is made for you and that you are made for IT.

If, like me, you saw it, every day—this holy religion, drying the tears of the poor, changing the most hardened hearts, arresting the progress of evil, repairing injuries, softening hatred and dislikes, infusing everywhere resignation, truth, peace, hope and joy into people's souls, you would soon alter your language, and I should have no need to press this subject upon you.

But, unfortunately, this *practical* and *experimental* proof of religion requires rather to be felt than heard of. It is experience, and not words, that makes us understand its invincible power.

You may not have reached that period of life when you will need the helps and consolations of religion; but that time will come for you as it has come for others. Witness the poor soldiers suffering and dying on the field of battle. Witness their appreciation of the helps of religion afforded to them by the Sisters of Charity whom even Protestants have called "Angels of the battlefield." Witness the helps of religion to humanity in the various asylums for infants and orphans, the sick, the aged and the poor. Go to the bedside of the sick and dying; go to the deathbeds of those who have faith in God and in religion, and witness their peace and content of mind, and you will realize the meaning of the words: "Without me, you can do nothing."

(John. xv. 5); and also of these other words: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.)

Nor does religion unfit a man for the duties of this life. On the contrary, it tends to restrain his passions, and affords him courage and strength to discharge his various duties toward God and his fellow-men; it makes him a law-abiding citizen, a lover of right and justice, who does not shrink from any sacrifice, even that of his own life, at the call of duty.

SECOND OBJECTION.

THERE IS NO GOD.

ANSWER. *Are you quite sure of that?* Who then has made the heavens and the earth, the sun, the stars, man, the world?

Did all these things create themselves? What would you say if some one were to show you a house, and tell you that it made itself? What would you say even if he pretended that it was possible? That he was laughing at you—would you not? or that he was mad; and you would be quite right.

If a house cannot make itself, how much less the wonderful creatures which fill the universe, beginning with our own bodies, which are the most perfect of all!

There is no God!—Who told you so? Some

thoughtless fellow, no doubt, who had not seen God, and thence concluded that he did not exist. Is there nothing real but that which we can see, hear, touch, or feel? Does not your thought, that is to say, your soul that thinks, exist? It exists so really, and you know it so evidently, that no reasoning in the world could convince you to the contrary. Yet, have you ever seen, or heard, or touched your thought? See, then, how absurd it is to say: There is no God, because I do not see Him.

God is a *pure spirit,* that is, a being which cannot be brought under the material senses of our body, and which is perceived only by the faculties of the soul.—Our soul is also *a pure spirit*: God has made it in his own image.

Some years ago, when irreligion seemed fashionable, a gentleman of talent was taking supper at the same table with some pretended philosophers who sneered at religion and denied the existence of God. The stranger kept silent. The clock was just striking when his opinion was asked. The stranger pointed to the clock, and said: "Gentlemen, do you hear the sound of that beautiful clock?" "Yes," they replied. "Well," said the stranger, "the various parts that compose that clock fell together of their own accord and produced that wonderful piece of mechanism." "Why, that's absurd," said the would-be infidels. "And not only that," continued the stranger, "but the big town clock which regulates this one, also fell into a happy combination and made itself." "Still more absurd," replied the infidels, growing somewhat im-

patient; "we did not expect the amusement of being entertained this evening by an inmate of some lunatic asylum." "But that's not all," said the stranger; "there is a bigger clock than any of these; it is a town clock for all towns; one, in fact, which regulates all other timekeepers; they call it the clock of the universe. Its great dial, the Sun, appearing regularly morning after morning, awakens, quickens into activity, and regulates the whole world. And yet some lunatics in our asylum claim that this great clock of the universe made itself." The infidels then became quite friendly with the stranger, who explained to them that, just as it is unreasonable and absurd to believe that a clock could exist and keep time without a clockmaker, so it is equally absurd and unthinkable that the earth, moon and stars could exist and move with such clocklike precision around the sun without the work of a Maker's hand. The infidels, seeing at once the force of the argument, admitted that they had never before stopped to consider the matter in that common sense light.

The belief of our Nation on this point is emblazoned in the dome of the National Library at Washington, in these words of the Holy Ghost: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands." (Psalm xviii. 2.)

St. Paul thus points out the existence of God: "The invisible things of Him (His existence, etc.) *are clearly seen from the creation of the world,* being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity; so

that they (unbelievers) are inexcusable." (Rom. i. 20.)

Another anecdote is related of the reply of a lady to a celebrated unbeliever of the Voltairian school. He had endeavored ineffectually to convert her to his atheism. Mortified by her resistance, "I could not have believed," said he, "that in a reunion of people of talent I should be the only one not to believe in God."

"But you are not alone," replied the mistress of the house; "my horses, my spaniel, and my cat also have that honor; only those poor beasts have the wit not to boast of it."

FATHER KIRCHER AND A YOUNG INFIDEL.

Father Athanasius Kircher, who lived in the seventeenth century, is recognized as one of the greatest scientists of his day. He was in turn a professor of philosophy, oriental languages, mathematics, Egyptology. He was a voluminous writer on mathematics and physical sciences, and his famous work "Mundus Subterranous" was a real cyclopedia, comprising all the geological knowledge of the day. At Rome he collected an enormous museum of scientific instruments, natural objects, models and antiquities, and he himself constructed many wonderful instruments. Father Kircher was the possessor of a magnificent globe representing our planetary system. By means of a secret spring the whole could be set in motion, reproducing in miniature the movement of the earth and the other planets around the sun. A young friend

of the great scientist called one day just as the priest was about to attend a dying woman. Kindly the priest invited the young man to his study, there to await his return. Quite naturally the young man's attention was soon drawn to the splendid globe, and as he was passing his hand over the instrument he accidentally touched the secret spring, starting the whole mechanism in motion. Lost in admiration of this wonderful imitation of the universe, the priest found him on his return. The first question the young man, who by the way was an avowed infidel, asked was: "Father, who is the genius that has made this wonderful instrument?" "Why," answered the priest, "nobody made it, it made itself." "Father," said the young man, "you are but trifling with me; it is against reason; it is an utter impossibility that this splendid and wonderful miniature of our universe should have made itself or be the work of chance." "What," answered the priest, "you admit that a genius was necessary to make this poor, insignificant miniature of the vast universe, and yet affirm that the great universe of which a single blade of living grass contains more wonders than this paltry globe, had no maker?" For a moment the young man reflected, then dropping on his knees he uttered his first profession of faith: "My God, I believe."

In plain English, do you know what that boasting phrase: "There is no God," means? Here is a faithful translation of it: "I am a bad man, who am very much afraid that there is some one above who will punish me."

THIRD OBJECTION.

WHEN ONE DIES, THERE IS AN END OF EVERYTHING.

ANSWER. Yes, if you are speaking of cats, dogs, asses, canary-birds, etc. But you are very modest if you reckon yourself in the number.

1st. You are a man, my friend, and not a beast. It is strange that it should be necessary to tell you so. You have a SOUL capable of reflecting, of doing good or evil, and that soul is immortal; the beasts have none.

That which makes *man* is the *soul;* that is to say, that which thinks within us, that which causes us to recognize truth, and to love good. This is what distinguishes us from beasts. This is why it is so great an insult to say to any one: "You are a beast, you are an animal," etc. It is to refuse to him his highest glory, that of being a *man.*

To say then: "When I die there will be an end of me," is to say: "I am a beast, a mere brute, an animal! And what an animal! I am not of so much value as my dog, for he runs faster, sleeps better, sees farther, has a more delicate sense of smell, etc., etc.; or as my cat, who sees in the dark, who has no trouble about her apparel, etc. In a word, I am a very inferior beast, the least gifted of animals."

If you like that, say it; believe it, if you can; but allow us to be a little more proud than you,

and to proclaim loudly, that we are *men*. 'Tis the least you can do.

2. What would the world come to if your assertion were true? It would become a regular den of infamy—good and evil, virtue and vice, would be nothing but idle words, or rather odious falsehoods!

Why, indeed, if, on one hand, I have nothing to fear in a future life, and if, on the other, I manage sufficiently well to have nothing to fear in this present one, why should I not steal, or murder, when it would serve my interest? Why should I not give myself up to all the excesses of licentiousness? Why curb my passions? I have nothing to fear; my conscience is a lying voice, upon which I will impose silence. One thing only is worth my attention; that is, to avoid the police and the officers of justice. *Good,* for me, as well as for every other sensible man, will be to elude them successfully; *evil,* to fall into their clutches.

"What language!" you say; "a man must be mad to use it seriously."

Very true. And yet, if there is an end of every thing for us on the day of our death, I defy you to gainsay this odious, this absurd language.

If there be no future state, I defy you to show me in what St. Vincent de Paul and the great army of Sisters of Charity are more worthy of our esteem than Tracy the outlaw, with his band of highway robbers.

Judge of the tree by its fruits, as we are taught by our own common sense, and by the

Gospel. By horrible consequences, judge of the principle; and dare to repeat again, "When we die there is an end to us!" We shall know henceforth what that means!

3d. While it is contrary to common sense, materialism is also contrary to the general and invincible sentiment of the whole human family. Always and everywhere men have believed in a future state. Always and everywhere the innocent who have been unjustly persecuted, the good man who has been unfortunate, have looked forward to another life for the justice and happiness which were denied to them in this world; always and everywhere men have believed in a God who will be the avenger of unpunished crime!

In fine, always and everywhere men have prayed for the dead, have hoped to find those whom they loved beyond the tomb and in a better world.

"Why do you weep?" said the dying Bernardin de Saint Pierre to his wife and children. "That which you lose in me will live always. . . . It is but a momentary separation; do not make it so painful. . . . *I feel that I am quitting only this earth, and not life.*"

Such is the voice of conscience; such is the voice, the sweet, the consoling voice of truth.

Such also is the solemn language of Christianity. It shows us the present life as a season of temporary trial, which God will crown with eternal happiness. It excites us to merit this happiness by self-sacrifice, and by the faithful

performance of our duty. When his last hour approaches, the Christian yields up his soul to God with confidence, and to a pure, holy, and peaceable life, succeeds an eternity of joy!

Far from us, then, far from our enlightened country, be this wretched materialism, which would snatch from us such sublime hopes! Far from us those errors which degrade the heart, which destroy all that is good, all that is dear and worthy of respect in this world!

Far from us be the doctrine which leaves to the suffering and weeping poor, to the innocent who are oppressed, nothing but despair for their inheritance!

The human conscience rejects such a doctrine with scorn!

FOURTH OBJECTION.

EVERYTHING IS GOVERNED BY CHANCE—OTHERWISE THERE WOULD NOT BE SO MUCH DISORDER ON EARTH. HOW MANY THINGS ARE USELESS, IMPERFECT, BAD! IT IS CLEAR THAT GOD DOES NOT CONCERN HIMSELF ABOUT US.

ANSWER. *"Chance?"*—And what is, then, this *chance?* It is an *I know not what,* that nobody knows any thing about—which no one has ever been able to define—which is nothing; a word devoid of sense, invented by the impious, to replace the name, so dreaded by them,

of Providence; a more convenient sort of language, and which has the appearance of explaining things, but which, in fact, is but unmeaning nonsense.

Chance governs nothing here on earth, because it is itself nothing. God alone, the Sovereign Lord and only Creator of all beings, governs, watches over, and ordains all by His Providence; that is to say, in His infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice, He conducts all in general, and each one individually, to their final end, by the means which He knows to be the most suitable.

Just as He has created all things without an effort, so does He preserve and govern them without becoming weary; and it is no more unworthy of His greatness to concern Himself about all His creatures than to make them all.

Those who say that God does not concern Himself about us are very absurd, to say no worse, for it is as *impossible* to conceive God without Providence as it would be to conceive light without splendor. It is *impossible* that an all-powerful God, knowing and seeing all things, should abdicate His Sovereign empire over His creatures, and, after having created them, should not govern them. It is impossible that a holy and just God, who must necessarily desire good and detest evil, should remain indifferent to our actions, whatever they be, good or bad.

Now, that is Providence. God does for us what a father does for his children. He watches over us; He teaches us what is right and what is wrong; He shows us the right path which

we must follow, the wrong one which we must avoid; He punishes us when we disobey Him, and rewards us when we fulfill His holy will. When He does not do it in this world, He does it in that which is to come. What can be more simple?

The idea of denying this Providence, this government of God, would never occur to us, if we did not imagine that we saw so much disorder on earth. "Why," we often say, "is there so much that is useless? Why so much that is bad? Why is this one born poor, and the other rich? Why are there so many inequalities in the condition of mankind? Why so many troubles and afflictions among some, and so much prosperity among others?" To hear us talk, all is indeed in great confusion, and we would have ordered every thing far better.

But who told us that what offends us so much is really confusion and disorder? What! do we judge a thing to be useless in the world because we do not know its use? We think it is bad, because we do not know what it is good for.

This is certainly a strange pretension! If an ignorant person, not able to read, were to open a volume of Shakespeare, and seeing so many unknown letters, arranged in a thousand different ways, united one to another, sometimes eight put together, sometimes six, at other times three, or seven, or two, so as to form words; seeing several lines following one after the other, this one at the beginning of a page, that at the end of one; so many leaves arranged, one at the beginning of the book, another in the middle, an-

other at the end; perceiving some blank spaces, others covered with printing, here capital letters, there small ones, etc.; if, I say, he were to see all this, of which he understands nothing, and he were to ask, why these letters, these leaves, these lines are put in such a place sooner than in another, why that which is at the beginning is not in the middle, or at the end, why the twentieth page is not the fiftieth, etc., he would be told: "My friend, it is a great poet, a man of genius, who has disposed all this so as to convey his thoughts: and if one page were put in the place of another, if one should transpose, not the lines only, but even the words or the letters, there would be disorder in this fine work, and the author's design would be destroyed."

And if this ignorant person were to pretend to be well-informed, and undertook to criticise the order of this volume: if he were to say, for instance: "But it seems to me it would have been much better to put all the letters that have any resemblance together, the large with those of the same size, and the small similarly; it would have been a far finer order had all the words been of the same length, and composed of the same number of letters; why are some so short and others so long? etc. Why is there space here and none there? It is all badly arranged; there is no order in it. The person who had done it understands nothing of such things; all is left to chance."—We should answer him: "Ignorant that you are! It is you who understands nothing of such things. If all were arranged according to your ideas, there

would be neither sense nor reason in that book. All is right as it is. A far higher intelligence than yours presided over, and still presides over this arrangement of things; and if you do not know the reason of it all, blame only your own ignorance."

We are like this when we criticise the works of God!

It is *His Great Book* that we behold when we cast our eyes over the world. All the centuries are like its pages, that follow one after the other; all the years are like the lines; and all the different creatures, from angels and men down to the least blades of grass, and the minutest grains of dust, are the letters, disposed each in its own place by the hand of that great Compositor Who alone is acquainted with His own eternal conceptions, and comprehends the WHOLE of His work.

If you ask why one creature is more perfect than another; why this one is placed here, and that one there; why winter is cold, and summer hot; why it rains now, and not at another time; why this loss of fortune, of health; why that sickness; why that young child's death, while the old man near to it lives on: why that good man is carried off by death, while the bad man who does nothing but evil is spared;—I shall reply to you that an *Infinite* intelligence, an *Infinite* wisdom, an *Infinite* justice and goodness has thus regulated these things, and that it is certain that all is in due order, although it may not seem so to us.

I shall reply to you, that to judge a work

correctly, you must know it entirely; you must consider it as a whole, and in its details, and compare the means with the end which they ought to attain. Now, what man, what creature has ever shared the secret of the eternal counsels of the Creator?

That would be necessary in order to appreciate the wisdom and justice of Providence with regard to reasonable and *free* men, destined to immortal life, capable of doing good and evil, capable of merit and demerit.

Sometimes, accommodating himself to our weakness, God deigns to justify Himself in this world by results which are either consoling or terrible. There is no age which has not witnessed these signal marks of the divine goodness or justice; crimes, which have been concealed with diabolical art, are brought to light by the most unlooked for, the most extraordinary means; audacious blasphemers are struck down at the very moment when they are defying that invisible God in whom they do not believe. In 1848, during the elections of the constituent assembly in the neighborhood of Toulouse, an impious demagogue was haranguing the peasant electors, seeking to destroy in their minds all respect for religion, that ever formidable obstacle to the projects of the wicked.

The orator attacked all belief, even denying the existence of God. "Let Him speak, then," he cried, pointing with his clenched hand toward heaven, "let Him speak, if He hears me!"

He had not finished speaking, when a terrible thunder-clap bursts forth, and strikes down the

blasphemer in the midst of the awed crowd! He was supposed to be dead, but he recovered his senses after a lapse of two hours. I doubt if afterwards he ever demanded fresh proofs of the existence of God.

Another wretch, more culpable, no doubt, was struck more terribly still, in 1849, at a little village near Caen. It was on a Sunday during mass. This man was with one of his friends at a public house, near the church. The sound of the bells aroused his fury. After a thousand fearful blasphemies against religion and against the priests, seizing his glass, and standing before his companion and the landlord, who vainly tried to calm him: "If there is a God," he exclaims, "let him prevent me from drinking my glass of wine!" and he fell at the same instant, struck dead by apoplexy! One might add innumerable instances of this kind, of Divine justice shown forth in this world. These are but specimens, pledges, as it were, of that justice which is to come.

God bestows also tokens of His providence upon the just. How much misery is assuaged against all expectation! How often do we find that we have served as instruments of the Divine goodness! The poor, and those true Christians who succor the poor, are at hand to vouch for this. Their life is like an acting providence; it is a living proof of Providence.

Why then does not God always justify in this manner, His justice, goodness, and holiness? The reason is simple enough. It is that this

present life is but the germ, the beginning of all that which relates to us, and that the consummation of God's work in us is more fitly to be looked for in eternity, where, alone, we attain to the perfect development of our being. It is that this present life is the season of faith which believes without seeing, which believes, notwithstanding appearances are against it, that which will be one day revealed to its sight when the veil shall be lifted.

We must never lose sight of Eternity, when we are forming a judgment of human affairs. It is the great restorer of order out of the apparent confusion of this world. "Why," it is said, "does not God punish this great criminal? Why is that wicked man loaded with prosperity, and that good man overwhelmed with misfortune? What care does God bestow upon these things? Where is His justice? Where is His wisdom? Where His goodness?"

Behold Eternity, which explains the mystery! It was just and wise to recompense, by the transient prosperity of this world, the little good done on earth by that impious man, that great sinner, whom eternity was to punish. And those good men, reputed by the world so unhappy, paid, by transient afflictions, the penalty due to the minor sins, which, in their human weakness, they had committed; a happy eternity was the recompense of their virtue!

It is by the standard of Eternity that we must estimate all that happens to man in this world. Without it, it is impossible to understand anything of the designs of God in regard to us.

Let us, then, reform our manner of viewing things. Let us no more judge our Mighty Judge. Neither you nor I, rely upon it, are as far-sighted as He is.

What He does is well done, and if He permits evil to be done, it is always for a greater good.

Don't you remember the gardener of the fable? He was busy in his garden, and happened to be near a large gourd.

"The Maker!" cries he, "of what did he dream?
That gourd he has very ill placed.
For me, I'd have hung it up there,
Upon one of those oaks in the air;
That would have been more to my taste.
Like fruit and like tree! as to me it doth seem.
'Tis a pity, good Garo, thou hadst not, to teach,
Been present with Him whom the curate doth preach;
'Twere all so much better contrived: marry, come
Yon acorn, which is not so big as my thumb,
In the place of the gourd I'd suspend.
God made a mistake; and the more I attend
To these fruits so ill placed, more it seems to Garo,
That here is a plain *quiproquo.*"

It was a warm day; friend Garo was hot and tired; he seeks the shade of one of the neighboring oaks and lies down at the foot of it. He was just beginning to sleep, when an acorn drops off, and, from the top of the tree, falls straight upon his nose. Garo, waking up with a start, cried out, and seeing the cause of what had befallen him:

"Oh! oh!" he cries, "I bleed! And where would I be,
If a heavier mass from the top of the tree
Had come down, and this acorn, a gourd it had been!
God thought it not fit; without doubt he was right;
And the reason is now very plain to my sight."
And praising the goodness of God with his might,
Good Garo returned his own cottage within.

Do you act like this worthy gardener, and, far from denying a Divine Providence, be careful never even to murmur against its decrees.

FIFTH OBJECTION.

RELIGION IS A VERY GOOD THING FOR WOMEN.

ANSWER. And why not, then, for men?

Either religion is true or it is false. If it is true, it is as true (and consequently as *good*) for men as for women. If it is false, it is no better for women than for men; because falsehood is not good for any one.

Yes, certainly, "religion is a very good thing for women," but also, and for the same reasons, it is good for men.

Like women, men have passions, often very violent ones, to struggle against; and like women, men cannot conquer them without the fear and the love of God, without those powerful means that religion *alone* can furnish.

For men, as well as women, life is full of difficult and painful duties; duties toward God,

toward society, toward their families, toward themselves.

For men as for women, there is a God to worship and to serve, an immortal soul to save, vices to shun, virtues to practice, a paradise to gain, a hell to avoid, a final judgment to fear, an ever-menacing death to be prepared to meet.

For one sex, the same as for the other, Christ died on the cross, and His commandments regard them both alike.

Religion is, then, as good for men as for women, and if there is a difference, it is that religion is even more indispensable to men than to women. They are, in fact, exposed to more dangers, they can do wrong more easily, and they are more surrounded by bad examples, particularly as regards loose morals, intemperance, and the neglect of religious duties.

Religion is good for every one. It is especially necessary for those who say it was not intended for them.

SIXTH OBJECTION.

IT IS ENOUGH TO BE AN HONEST MAN; THAT IS THE BEST RELIGION OF ALL, AND IT IS ENOUGH.

ANSWER. Yes; to escape hanging; but not to go to Heaven. Yes:—in the sight of men:—in the sight of God, the sovereign Judge—No!

1st. "It is enough to be an honest man," you

say. Be it so then; but let us understand each other. What do you call *an honest man?* That is an expression which appears to me very elastic, remarkably convenient, and which is capable of accommodating itself to many and varied tastes.

Ask some licentious young man, for instance, if it is possible to be *an honest man* while leading the more than dissipated life that he does? "What a question!" he will reply; "the follies of youth do not prevent one's being called an honest man. Undoubtedly, I claim to be considered such, and I should like to see the person who would dispute my title to it!"

Then, turning to the covetous tradesman, who sets off his goods of inferior quality and sells them as if they were first-rate; to the artisan who works but half as diligently when he is paid by the day as he does when he is paid by the job; to the master who takes advantage of hard times to rob his workmen of their Sunday's repose; ask all these persons if what they thus do prevents their being really *honest people?* And not one of them will hesitate to reply that he is an honest man, and that these little artifices, these tricks of trade, have nothing to do with the question.

Ask, once more, that spendthrift, if his prodigality—that miser, if his avarice—that frequenter of the public house, if his drunkenness—destroys his *honesty?* Each will claim indemnity for his besetting passion, while he calls himself an honest, nay, a very honest man!

Thus from these admissions even of the *hon-*

est persons of whom we are here treating, men who are dissipated, dishonest, given to intemperance, miserly, usurious, prodigal, dissolute, may be *honest men,* and no one can refuse them the title, provided they have not stolen any money or committed any murders!!

Don't you think this new morality is very convenient? Whoever is not brought before the assize court will never have any account to render to God? In fact, one must no longer examine the heart to judge persons' characters, but the shoulder, and whoever has not the *convict's brand* is to be reputed fit for Heaven!!

What a religion, then, is the *honest man's* religion! And you say that it is your religion! and the best of all religions! One which permits everything short of robbery and murder! But you do not reflect upon it. It is a perversion of ideas, and an atrocious doctrine, and no religion at all.

2dly. "But," you say, "I mean more by an *honest man* than is usually meant. I call him an HONEST MAN *who fulfils all his duties, who does good and shuns evil.*"

And I, on the other hand, reply, and I affirm it, supported by experience, that if you are such a man without the powerful aid of religion, you are an eighth wonder of the world; but I would stake my life that you are no such thing.

For you cannot make me believe that you have no passions—no disorderly inclinations; all men have them, and many of them. If, then, you are naturally inclined to licentiousness, to

gluttony or sensual pleasures, what will restrain you? If you are inclined to idleness, to violence, to *pride,* what will moderate these passions? What will refrain your arm, what will bridle your tongue? The fear of God? But there is no question of that in the honest man's religion. The voice of reason? We know what reason can do in a combat with a violent passion. What then? I can see nothing but the fear of the police, mere brute force. A noble religion this, truly! I congratulate you upon it —but I prefer my own.

The Christian religion alone offers efficacious remedies for our passions, and opposes a sufficient check upon their extravagances. Unless you claim that a man cannot sin, that he is an angel, we must necessarily infer that without the powerful aids that Christianity furnishes we cannot be CONSTANTLY *faithful to* ALL *the great duties, the observing of which constitutes the truly honest man.* Without Christianity we cannot, above all, fulfill them with that uprightness of intention which makes all their moral beauty.

The most virtuous Christians (such is the weakness of mankind, from which you pretend to be exempt)—the most virtuous Christians fail from time to time in their duty, in spite of the superhuman strength which they draw from faith. And you who are deprived of this all-powerful check, abandoned to your natural inclinations, exposed to the countless dangers of the world, you pretend to be always faithful to yours!

I affirm with certainty that the man who, not being a Christian, calls himself an *honest man* (in the sense we have just indicated), either is under a most palpable delusion, or else lies to his conscience.

3dly. I will go further. Supposing even that I were to see you perfectly fulfilling your duties of citizen, father, husband, son, friend, in a word, all those duties which make the *honest man,* according to the world's definition, I should say still: "That is not enough!"

No; *that is not enough.* And why? Because there is a God who reigns in the Heavens, who has created you, who preserves you, who calls you to Himself, who imposes a fixed law upon you, which no one has the power to annul. Because you have duties toward this great God, of adoration, of thanksgiving, of prayer, as strict, as necessary, and even more essential, than your duties toward your fellow creatures. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth *the will* of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.)

Can a man who has treated some friend with ingratitude say to himself, "I am a good man, I have nothing to reproach myself with?" No, certainly! Well, then; you—*honest* man, according to the world—are guilty of ingratitude toward God in forgetting Him! He is your father, you owe to him your being, your life, your intelligence, your moral dignity, the health

you enjoy, the goods of this world, all, in fact; He has created the universe for you, for your use, for your enjoyment. He has Himself taught you His law, He has saved you. He prepares for you in Heaven eternal happiness. He is your Lord; He is your master; He gives you His blessing; He pardons you; He loves you; He waits for you! . . .

And what do you give Him in exchange? How much love, respect, homage? You coldly discuss the pretexts that have been invented by His enemies to withdraw you from His service! You, perhaps, have nothing but sarcasms, hatred, contempt for everything that pertains to his worship! You do not pray to Him. You do not adore Him. You do not give thanks to Him. You jest at faith in His word, at the observance of His laws!!

Ungrateful that you are! And you have nothing to reproach yourself with? And you fulfil ALL *your duties?* . . .

Cease, I beg you, to cherish this illusion! Of what use is it to deceive one's self? Of what use to disguise one's faults?

Rather acknowledge that the yoke of religion, that is, of duty, alarms you, and that it is to release yourself from it with decorum that you have adopted this *religion of the honest man.*

Not only is it not enough, but it is, to say the truth, only a well-sounding phrase, empty of meaning and intended to palliate in our own eyes and those of the world the disorders and weaknesses for which the practice of Christian-

ity is the sole remedy. "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire." (Matt. iii. 10.)

SEVENTH OBJECTION.

MY RELIGION IS TO DO GOOD TO OTHERS.

ANSWER. Nothing can be better. It is just what the Christian religion most pressingly commands us to do; even assimilating this duty to that higher and more fundamental one of loving God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," we are told is the first commandment. And the second, *which is like unto the first*, is this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

These are the very words of Jesus Christ (St. Matthew, ch. xxii), but He adds something of which you do not take heed: "*Upon* these TWO commandments hangs all the law."

You, whose religion consists, you say, only in doing good to others, you suppress one of the two commandments, the chief one, from which the other generally springs, which develops and nourishes it, and alone raises it up to heroism and to the height of a *religious* duty—the commandment of the love of God and the obligation of serving Him.

We must have the use of *both* legs to walk, must we not? Just so, to fulfil our destiny on

earth and reach heaven, we must practice *both* the great commandments:

1. Thou shalt love thy God.

2. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Therefore, the second is rarely observed where the first is neglected; the experience of nineteen centuries proves this. Those Christians who rest the love of their fellow-creatures on the love of God are the only ones who love them *truly, efficaciously, purely and constantly.*

Who have been the greatest benefactors of suffering humanity? *The Saints,* that is, men whose hearts were inflamed with the love of God.

To cite but one of these, look at St. Vincent de Paul, that hero of brotherly charity, that father of the afflicted, who continues even in these times to do good all over the world by means of the benevolent institutions he founded! Who was Vincent de Paul? A priest, a churchman! What was the source of his unexampled devotion to his fellow-creatures? The love of God, the practice of Christ's religion.

What are the institutions of benevolence which prosper most (not to say which alone prosper)?

What are those which live, which develop themselves and endure through all ages? Those which the Church founds; those which rest on a religious idea, which are crowned by the cross of Jesus Christ!

Who founded hospitals? The Church.

Who gave refuge in all times—who, in our days, despite the obstacles which blinded governments have raised up—still gives refuge to

every kind of misery, whether of the body or the soul, of infancy, manhood or old age? The Church.

Who has founded, for the relief of each of these miseries, religious orders of men and women, some devoted to foundlings, some to the education of the poor, some to the nursing of the sick, others to the care of lunatics, to the reclaiming of criminals, to sheltering the weary traveller, etc., etc., etc.? The Church, and the Church alone.

It is she who gives birth to the most perfect devotedness to humanity; she produces the *sister of charity,* as she produces the *missionary* and the *monk of St. Bernard!* Always by means of the love of God, as the most solid foundation of the love of mankind.

In the present age, more than ever, we hear much said about humanity, fraternity, the love of the poor. Systems are built up; fine words cost nothing; books are published and speeches are made. Why have they all so little result? Because religion does not vivify these efforts. No effect can subsist without its cause; the cause, the most fertile principle of brotherly charity, is Divine charity, or the love of God.

Distrust these fine systems of fraternity, then, which are independent of religion. There is no love of our fellow-creatures, *pure, efficacious, solid or durable,* that is not founded in Jesus Christ and maintained by His religion.

EIGHTH OBJECTION.

RELIGION, INSTEAD OF SPEAKING SO MUCH OF THE LIFE TO COME, OUGHT RATHER TO OCCUPY ITSELF WITH THE PRESENT ONE, AND DESTROY ITS MISERY.

ANSWER. Religion speaks much of the life to come, because that life, being eternal, is of vast importance, and is much more worthy than the present life, that we should be occupied with it. It is there, in fact, that is to be decided forever the great question of happiness or misery; on earth we do but prepare its solution.

But if she speaks a great deal of the life eternal, Religion is far from neglecting the life of this present world. All the interests of man are present to her; his soul, his body, his transitory life, his future and unchangeable life; she forgets nothing.

If she does not completely destroy the miseries of life, it is because *those miseries* CANNOT *be destroyed;* and they cannot be destroyed because the causes which produce them cannot be suppressed.

Of these, the first is the inequality of physical strength, of bodily health, of talents, intelligence and energies in men. If, in consequence of an accident, or simply from the effect of old age, I lose the strength necessary for pursuing my trade or occupation, shall I not fall into misery? If, in spite of all my efforts, I am so unskilful as not to be able to work as well as my

fellow-workmen, will not my customers prefer to deal with those who excel me; and shall I not fall into misery? Yet, who can guarantee us from sickness, accidents or old age? Who can give talent to those who have it not? Who can render all men equal in strength, in intellect, in willingness? See, then, here a fertile source of misery, and one which it is impossible even for religion to destroy.

The second cause of human misery, not less profound than the first, arises from the vices incidental to our feeble nature, corrupted by sin; idleness, licentiousness, drunkenness, inordinate love of pleasure, revenge, pride, etc.

Among a hundred poor persons, how many are unhappy *through their own faults!* Nineteen out of twenty. They accuse heaven, when they ought only to accuse themselves. The *good* poor soon find help; God and the faithful children of God never abandon them!

Poverty, like sickness and death, is the punishment of sin. It is impossible to destroy it; for it is impossible to destroy original sin, which is an established fact, and to render man impeccable. But that which is possible, and which religion performs admirably, is to lessen misery, to relieve and soften its pangs, to render it supportable, in fine, to sanctify it.

Religion reveres, in the body, the temple of that immortal soul, which is itself the living temple of God. She exerts herself to heal, to prevent even, all these afflictions, by the numberless charitable institutions, the asylums of every kind which abound in the Christian world.

Wherever her voice is listened to, the rich man becomes the friend, the brother and often the servant of the poor. He pours forth joyfully his superfluity into the lap of the afflicted. The poor man in his turn learns to hope. He learns, in the school of Jesus Christ, to endure with patience, and sometimes he even attains so high as to love sufferings, which he knows are destined, in the adorable designs of his heavenly Father, to prove his fidelity, to purify him of his failings, to render him more like to his poor and crucified Saviour, and to lay up for him ineffable treasures of happiness in the eternal Country!

How many good poor have I not seen thanking God for their sufferings, and rejoicing in their privations!

Religion, therefore, does just what she ought by occupying herself with our happiness in this life, but occupying herself a great deal more with the life to come.

None have any cause to complain of religion. Let the rich become good Christians and consequently charitable; and the poor become good Christians, and consequently patient and resigned; this is the secret of happiness. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

NINTH OBJECTION.

WE OUGHT TO ENJOY LIFE; WE MUST HAVE A GOOD TIME OF IT; GOD IS TOO GOOD TO HAVE CREATED US FOR ANYTHING BUT HAPPINESS.

ANSWER. Oh, yes! God, in His goodness, has created us only to make us happy! But the great point is not to misunderstand what HAPPINESS is.

You seek happiness. You are right. But beware of deceiving yourself in the choice of your means for attaining it! Many roads lie open before you; *one only* is the right road; woe be to him who takes a wrong one!!

It is a mistake more easy to make at the present day than ever; for never, I think, has our country been more inundated with lying doctrines on this subject. Wicked or deluded men diffuse on all sides, and through the many channels which the press affords, doctrines which, flattering human passions, easily penetrate into the minds of the people.

They would fain persuade us that we are placed here on earth only for the purpose of enjoyment; that all hopes of a future life are but chimeras; that happiness consists in material prosperity, in money, and the means of enjoyment which money can procure. Such is the doctrine of *mere pleasure*.

It is the doctrine which is at this moment striving to gain the mastery over Christianity and to materialize happiness. In the last century

it was called *Philosophy;* in our times it is called COMMUNISM, SOCIALISM, etc.*

I will not insult you by attempting to prove that such happiness is of a *degrading* kind. It is sufficiently obvious. It annihilates all that distinguishes us from the brute creation, goodness, virtue, self-devotion, moral order. Man no longer differs from his dog except externally; *happiness* for both is the same, the satisfaction of all their inclinations, mere brute enjoyment!

But the point on which the world is not yet convinced, and to which I would direct your attention, is the *practical impossibility* of the communist doctrine, the absurdity of this universal happiness.

I want to make you feel its *absolute opposition to the natural order of things, to existing facts, which nothing can change;* and to convince you that such a system is nothing but a dream, a dangerous and ridiculous Utopia, and that under the fine words with which it arrays itself there is *nothing.*

If there is a fact that is proved, and as clear as the light of the sun, it is without contradiction, the sad necessity we are under, here below, of suffering and dying; this is the condition of man in what is *essential* to it on earth; it is the condition in which I am, in which you are, in

* The fundmental principle of these systems is the same, as regards morality; they differ only in some details of their application, by no means essential.

This doctrine, as professed by the learned, is called *Pantheism.* The morality of Pantheism is the same as that of Communism. It is Communism talking Latin and dressed up as a pedagogue and a pedant.

which our fathers were and our children will be, and no human efforts can extricate us from it.

Are there not, I ask, here below, and will there not *always, always, always* be sickness, sufferings, afflictions? Are there not, and will there not always be widows and orphans?—mothers weeping inconsolably beside the empty cradle of the child?

Are there not, and will there not always be struggles between temperaments opposed to each other?—collisions of wills?—deep deceptions?

Can any thing change this state of things? Will *any new organization of society,* WHATEVER IT BE, preserve us from diseases, sufferings, consumption, fever, gout, cholera?—preserve us from losing those whom we love? Will it prevent the disagreeable variations of the seasons, the rigor of winter's cold, the burning heat of summer? Will it free man from his tendencies to vice? from pride, egotism, violence, hatred? Will it, above all, prevent his DYING?

Is all this true, or is it not? And is it not as certain, as indubitable, that *it is,* as it is certain that it *will always be* the state of things? One must be crazy to deny it!

And what becomes—pray tell me—in presence of this *fact*—what becomes, in the midst of so many inevitable evils, of *that constant enjoyment,* that PERFECT TERRESTRIAL HAPPINESS which Communism promises us? The mere approach of sickness, sorrow and death, suffices to destroy it! And these terrible foes are ever at our door.

Your Communism, or Socialism, then (give it

what name you please), is a dream, a vain Utopia, contrary to the nature of things.

It cheats itself, then, or it cheats me, when it promises to me the repose of perfect happiness on earth, where such cannot exist, and when it makes it consist in an impossible state of enjoyment.

I must, therefore, seek for happiness elsewhere, for that it is somewhere to be found I know; the wisdom, the goodness, the power of God are a sure guarantee of this to me. . . .

Where, then, am I to seek it? There, where Christianity points it out to me: *in the germ here on earth, but in its perfection in Heaven.* "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt. xi. 28.)

Christianity—*it* is in perfect accordance with the great *fact* of our mortal condition. It explains to us the formidable problem of suffering and happiness.

Christianity embraces man in all his relations, and takes him just as he is by nature; it takes account of the essential *facts* which Communism ignores (such as original degradation, the sentence of perpetual penance, the Redemption of Jesus Christ, the necessity of imitating the Saviour, so as to have a share in that redemption, the eternal life which awaits us, etc.). Christianity does not deal in airy reasonings based on chimerical suppositions, like Communism.

Communism discerns in us nothing but the outside shell; it forgets the kernel, which is the soul. Christianity does not forget the shell, that is the body; but it also perceives the kernel, and

it finds that the kernel is of more value than the shell. It refers every thing to the soul, to eternity, to God. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (St. Matt. xvi. 26.)

By means of an influence as gentle as it is powerful, Christianity cleanses the *soul* little by little of its pride, its cupidity, its concupiscence, its excesses, its selfishness; in a word, of all its vices; and it thus penetrates to the deepest roots of the greater number of those evils that we have just enumerated. In fact, our troubles, in most cases, spring from our passions, and Christianity calms these passions; it restrains their vehemence, it tames them.

Christianity communicates to the heart that joy, that peace so sweet, which purity of conscience produces.

Faith shows us clearly the path which leads to happiness; hope and love make us run in that path, and render light and pleasant the yoke of duty. "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." (St. Matt. xi. 30.)

If Christianity does so much for the soul, it does not forget the *body*. We have described above the cares which it bestows upon it.

Christianity occupies itself with the body, not as with the chief and master (that would be disorder), but as with the confederate and companion. It preserves it by sobriety and chastity; sanctifies it by external worship, by participation in the sacraments, and, above all, by a union with the sacred body of Jesus Christ in the Eucha-

Christianity receives its dying breath; it accompanies it with honor to its final resting-place; and even there does not bid it an eternal adieu. It knows that one day that Christian body, purified by the baptism of death, will come forth radiant from its dust, will revive in glory, will be reunited to the soul and enjoy with it, in Paradise, ineffable delight! . . .

Such is Christianity.

It understands what happiness is, promises it, and confers it. It confers on earth that happiness which is possible on earth. If it does not give unalloyed happiness it is because such ought not to be given, and cannot, here below.

Christianity rests its promises on the most solid proofs. That which he does not now possess, the Christian *knows,* IS SURE he will possess hereafter.

Therefore, *every true Christian is* HAPPY. He has trouble, sorrow; it is impossible to be free from them here; but his heart is ever filled, ever calm and content.

Does Socialism thus treat the poor wanderers whom it amuses with its chimeras? It promises what no human power can give; it promises the *impossible.* . . . It has no other guarantees than the audacious affirmations of its chiefs; and are those chiefs calculated to inspire confidence?

"The world will be happy," they say, "*when every thing is changed.*" Yes, but WHEN *shall every thing be changed?* If, as we believe we have proved, this change is contrary to the nature of things, the world runs a great risk of never finding happiness.

Socialism is something like the wily barber, who put over his shop door:

"To-morrow, shaving GRATIS here!"

To-morrow remained always *to-morrow*.

Socialism desires the recompense without the labor; the Christian desires the recompense after the labor.

The one talks like workmen of bad character, the other like good workmen. Thus every good-for-nothing, every lazy fellow willingly adopts the Socialist doctrines, and instinctively rejects the voice of religion.

Let our country, therefore, beware of these hollow but seductive promises, with which her enemies fill their newspapers, novels, and pamphlets.

Let her reject such promises; let her punish by a just contempt the men who are not ashamed to propose to their brethren the ignoble happiness of brutes—mere sensual enjoyment.

Let us raise our heads; let us revive our torpid faith; let us again be Christians! Here alone is the remedy for all our evils. Let us learn to understand, like our fathers, those divine lessons which the GREAT MASTER has left to us on the subject of HAPPINESS.

"BLESSED *are the poor in spirit* (that is to say, those whose spirit is detached from the fragile goods of the world), *for theirs is the kingdom of* HEAVEN!

"BLESSED *are the meek and the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God!*

"BLESSED *are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted!*

"BLESSED *are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!*

"BLESSED *are the pure of heart, for they shall see God!*" (Matt. v. 3, etc.)

The impure cannot see God, nor the things of God, because their hearts are blinded by their impurities. "They will not set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have *not known* the Lord." (Osee. v. 4.)

A curse hangs like a gloomy pall over the hearts of the impure and the obstinate. The Almighty said to the Prophet Isaias: "Go and blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and I heal them." (Isaias vi. 10.)

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented; and especially them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and *despise government, audacious, self-willed,* they fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming. But these men, as irrational beasts, naturally tending to the snare and to destruction, blaspheming those things which they know not, shall perish in their corruption, having eyes full of adultery and of sin that ceaseth not." (2 Peter ii. 9, etc.)

Let us instruct our minds, and imbue them with this Catholic religion; let us infuse its spirit

into our hearts, our manners, our institutions, and our laws! We shall enjoy *the happiness which is* POSSIBLE in this world, and *the happiness which is* PERFECT in the world to come!

He who desires more than this is a madman who will never enjoy either the one or the other.*

TENTH OBJECTION.

THE APOSTLES AND EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE COMMUNISTS. THEY WERE POOR, AND HAD ALL THINGS IN COMMON; THEY WERE PURSUED AND HUNTED DOWN BY THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES, JUST AS THE COMMUNISTS ARE.

ANSWER. *"Or, just as malefactors are,"* you might add. And that is enough to show you where your reasoning fails.

And tell me, since when does it suffice to be poor, to have things in common, to be pursued and imprisoned in order to be a Christian?

That which constitutes the *Christian* is not outward poverty, but a mind disengaged from the transitory goods of earth; it is not the bare material fact of having things in common, but the invisible ties of fraternal charity, which makes of all hearts but one heart.

* Although this chapter is more applicable to the state of France than it is to America, it is not without great pertinence here, too; the essential doctrine of the Communists has many advocates on this side the Atlantic.

Such were the early Christians; angels in the flesh, men dead to the world and to themselves, living only in Jesus Christ, aspiring only to a happy eternity.

And it is to these men of prayer, of penitence, of meekness, and celestial peace that you would venture to compare the detestable bands of our modern secret societies! You would give for brethren to these men of eternity, men who do not even believe in eternity, and who aspire *only* to the pleasures of this world? . . . Good God! what an aberration of mind!

The Communists are persecuted, they are tracked by justice, transported; yes, no doubt they are. But here again is it enough to be pursued, imprisoned, even killed, to be called a disciple of JESUS CHRIST?

According to this method, all robbers, all murderers, would be excellent Christians!

The Apostles and Christians were persecuted because of their virtues; you, promoters of anarchy, are persecuted because of your excesses. They strove to sanctify the world, you desire to excite sedition. Prayer and meekness of heart were their weapons; they went forth to martyrdom, pardoning their executioners; while you, armed with deadly weapons, harbor nothing but envy, hatred and revenge in your hearts.

No, you are not Christians, but *Anti-Christians!* You blaspheme that which Christians adore, and that which you love they abhor.

Besides, there still exists, and has never ceased to exist among the disciples of the Gospel, that primitive and perfect life, in which all men are

brethren, where all things are in common, where poverty and sanctity reign. Visit our monasteries. There you will find what you seek; they are real *Phalansteries,* of which the communist Utopias are but a horrible and unreal imitation.

Let not, then, the Socialists in future usurp the sacred name of the Saviour; let them no more speak of *persecutions,* of *martyrdom,* of *Calvary.* They are, it is true, on Calvary; but they are there like the bad thief crucified for his crimes, and not like the Divine Son of MARY.

ELEVENTH OBJECTION.

THERE ARE MANY LEARNED MEN AND PEOPLE OF MIND WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN RELIGION.

ANSWER. What is to be concluded from this, except that it is not enough to have profane learning or to possess talent, in order to be a Christian, and to receive from God the gift of faith; but that something more is required; namely, a pure and upright heart, humble, well-regulated, willing to make those sacrifices that the knowledge of truth imposes.

Now, this is just what is wanting among those learned men (and they are few) who are irreligious.

1st. Either they are indifferent and ignorant in matters of religion; absorbed in their mathematical, astronomical, physical studies, they think

neither of God nor of their soul; and hence it is not surprising that they know nothing of religion. In what concerns religion they are ignorant, and their judgment on it is worth no more than that of a hodcarrier about music and painting.

There are some learned men who are more ignorant of religion than a child of ten years old, who is assiduous in learning his catechism.

2d. Or else, what happens oftener, they are haughty spirits who presume to judge God, to argue with Him as an equal, and to measure His word by the dimensions of their feeble reason. Pride is the profoundest in its malice of all the vices. Therefore, they are justly rejected as presumptuous minds, and deprived of that light which is given only to simple and humble hearts. God does not love proud rebels.

3d. Or else, what happens still oftener, and is generally accompanied by the other two vices, these learned men cherish some bad passions of which they will not rid themselves, and which they know to be incompatible with the Christian religion.

Moreover, if one will only weigh the number and value of the witnesses, the difficulty entirely disappears.

One may affirm that, for the last eighteen hundred years, among the eminent men of each century there has not been more than one in twenty who was a freethinker.

And in this trivial number one may also affirm that the majority were not steadily incredulous, but before their death took refuge in the arms of that religion which they had so often blas-

phemed. Such were, among others, some of the leaders of the Voltarian school of the eighteenth century, *Montesquieu, Buffon, la Harpe, etc.*

Voltaire himself, when illness overtook him in Paris, sent for the rector of St. Sulpice about a month before his death. The danger passed, and with the danger the fear of God, which it had inspired. But a second crisis came on: all the impious companions of the sick man hastened to his side. His physician, an eye-witness of the scene, attests that Voltaire again called for the assistance of religion, but this time in vain; the priest was not allowed to approach the dying man, who expired a prey to the most horrible despair!

D'Alembert also was anxious to confess his sins; and he was prevented, just as his master had been, by the *philosophers* surrounding his bedside. "If we had not been there," one of them afterwards said, "he would have played the coward just like the others!"

What *moral* value have these men? And what does their irreligion prove, above all if you oppose to them the enlightened faith of the most learned men, the great geniuses, the men most worthy of our veneration that have ever appeared on earth?

Their faith required of these great men, as it does of all men, disagreeable restraints and imperative duties. The evidence of the truth of Christianity alone could have compelled them to give in their adhesion to its teachings.

Not to speak of those admirable doctors of

he Church, called *Fathers,* and who were almost he only philosophers and savants of the first ifteen centuries, such as St. Athanasius, St. Amrose, St. Gregory the Great, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Thomas of Aquinas (the most extraordinary man who has ever existed, perhaps), how many illustrious names may not religion count among her children?

Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche, d'Aguesseau, Lamoignon, Mathew Molé, Cujas, Domat, de Maistre, de Bonald, etc., among the great philosophers, jurisconsults, and erudite of the world.

Bossuet, Fenelon, Bourdaloue, Massillon, among great orators.

Corneille, Racine, Dante, Tasso, Boileau, Chateaubriand, etc., among men of letters and poets.

And our military glories, are they not for the most part blended with religion? Was not *Charlemagne* a Christian? *Godfrey of Bouillon, Tancred, Bayard, du Guesclin, Joan of Arc, Crillon, Vauban, Villars, Catinat,* etc., did they not bend before religion their illustrious brows, bound with the laurels of a thousand victories? *Henry IV., Louis XIV.,* were Christians. *Turenne* was a Christian, he had received the Holy Communion the very day of his death. *The Great Condé* was a Christian. And above all these, St. Louis, that real hero, that prince so perfect and so amiable, the glory alike of France and of the Church.

All know the sentiments of the great *Napoleon*

touching Christianity. In the intoxication of power and ambition, he neglected the practical duties of religion, I admit; but he always preserved his belief in it and respect for it: "I am a Christian, a Roman Catholic," he said; "so is my son. I would be much grieved if my grandson should not be the same." . . . "The greatest service I have ever rendered to France," he also added, "is the re-establishment of the Catholic religion." "Without religion, to what would men come? They would cut one another's throats for the prettiest woman, or for the largest pear!"

When he found himself alone, at St. Helena, he began to reflect on the faith of his childhood, and in his profound genius Napoleon found the Catholic faith to be both real and holy.

He asked of religion its last consolations.

He sent for a Catholic priest to come to St. Helena, and attended the mass which was celebrated in his apartments. He desired that on abstinence days no flesh-meat should be served at his table. He surprised the companions of his exile by the force with which he set forth, in conversation, the fundamental doctrines of Catholicism.

When near to death he sent away the physicians, begged to see the Abbé Vignali, his chaplain, and said to him: "I believe in God; I was born in the Catholic religion; and I wish to fulfill the duties which it imposes, and to receive the last aid that it affords us."

And the emperor confessed, received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction. "I am happy

to have fulfilled my duties," he said to General Montholon. "I wish you, at your death, the same happiness, general. I never practiced them when on the throne, because power dazzles the mind. But I have always had faith; the sound of church-bells is agreeable to my ears, and the sight of a priest affects me. I wanted to make a mystery of all this, but that is a weakness. I desire to render glory to God!"

He then gave orders himself that an altar should be erected in the next room, so that there might be an Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the Forty Hours devotion.

Thus died Napoleon, as a Christian.

We should not be afraid of deceiving ourselves in following the example of all those great men, the number of whom, and their religious knowledge, but above all their moral worth, prevails far over those few men who have chosen to despise Christianity.

Pride, the passion for profane knowledge which absorbed them entirely, and other passions yet more degrading and headstrong, are more than sufficient reasons to explain their unbelief; while the truth of religion alone has been powerful enough to bow the necks of the others under the sacred yoke of Catholicism!

TWELFTH OBJECTION.

PRIESTS MAKE A TRADE OF RELIGION, THEY DO NOT BELIEVE WHAT THEY PREACH.

ANSWER. What do you venture to assert? The priests of Jesus Christ are impostors! Pray, how do you know that? How can you read their hearts, and pronounce whether they believe or do not believe in the sacred origin of their priesthood? It is the accuser's business to prove what he advances. I defy you to prove this accusation.

You will, perhaps, cite, by way of proof, the name of some bad priest.

I must then remind you that the exception proves the rule. A wicked, unbelieving priest would not be so much the subject of comment if the great majority were not so holy, pure and venerable.

A spot of ink is seen with extraordinary distinctness on a pure white robe; it would be hardly perceptible if the robe were black or soiled.

So it is with the Catholic priesthood, to whom impiety thus pays an involuntary homage.

That there are bad priests is not a strange thing. Remember there was a Judas among the twelve Apostles! Just as the Apostles, the first priests, the first Bishops of the Church, thrust out the traitor from among them, and were not responsible for his crime, so the Church condemns, with even more energy and horror than you yourselves express, those traitorous priests

who desert their sublime duties! She first endeavors to bring them back into the right way by gentleness and pardon; priests, as well as other men, have a right to mercy; but the irreclaimable, those who persevere in the bad road, she cuts off from her communion, and strikes them with her anathemas.

Priests are impostors! And what interest have they then in hearing your confessions, reproving you for your vices, preaching to you, catechising your children, feeding the poor, giving to this one good advice; to that one, consolation; to another, bread?

Would it be possible to curtail by a farthing their slender revenues, and the still more slender nature of their occasional fees, if they kept silence about the irregularities and excesses of their parishioners, if they admitted any or every person to the sacraments, without giving themselves the trouble of examining the state of their conscience, or if they were to abridge their catechising, etc.? What worldly interest have they then in fulfilling well their ministry?

No, no; the priest is not what the impious proclaim him to be, and it is because they are aware of this that these people detest the priest so cordially. They see in him the representative of the God Who condemns their vices, the envoy of Jesus Christ, whom they blaspheme, and Who will judge them. They see in him the personification of that law of God which they unceasingly violate; and it is because they do not wish to acknowledge the MASTER that they do not wish to recognize His minister.

THIRTEENTH OBJECTION.

PRIESTS ARE DRONES IN THE HIVE! OF WHAT USE ARE THEY?

ANSWER. They are of use in saving souls! Certainly, here is an employment which is at least as good as many others.

The mechanic works upon matter; the priest works on the *soul*. As much as the soul is higher than matter, so much is the priest's work higher than all the labors of the earth.

The priest continues the great labor of the salvation of mankind. JESUS CHRIST, his God and his Model, began it; His priests continue it through all ages.

After His example, the priest goes about doing good. He is a man who belongs to all; his heart, his time, his health, his diligence, his purse, his life, belong to all; above all, to the lowly ones of the earth, to children, to the poor, the neglected, those who weep, and who are friendless. He expects nothing in exchange for this devotedness; most frequently, indeed, he receives only insults, abominable calumnies and ill treatment. True disciple of his Divine Master, he replies only by continuing to do good. What a life! What superhuman abnegation!

In public calamities, civil wars, contagious diseases, in times of cholera, when the Protestant ministers and philanthropists think of personal preservation, the priest is to be seen exposing his life and health to relieve and save his

brethren; such was Monsigneur Affre, Archbishop of Paris, on the barricades; such were Belzunce and St. Charles Borromeo, in the time of the plague at Marseilles and Milan; such, during the cholera in 1832 and 1849, all the clergy of Paris and so many other towns, who made themselves the public servants of the whole people.

This, then, is the use of the priests! I should like to know if those who attack them are of more use.

The ungrateful wretches! They are never weary of loading with insults him whom they summon to their bedside in time of sorrow or privation, who has blessed them in their earlier years, and who never ceases to pray for them.

All the miseries of our country arise from our not practicing what the priests teach. And unfortunate France, torn with civil discords and political commotions, may apply to herself the language addressed to the chaplain of one of the Paris prisons by a poor convict, who had returned to God with all his heart. The priest had given him a little Christian's manual. "Ah, father!" he said one day, showing the little book, "if I had known the contents of this, and had practiced these maxims all my life, I should not have done what I have now done, nor should I have been where I now am!"

If France had always known, and if she now knew what priests really do teach, and if she had always practiced those doctrines, and continued doing so, she would not have been tossed about by three or four revolutions in the space

of fifty years, and be reduced to ask herself in the present day, Am I about to perish entirely? Can I still hope to be saved from destruction?

She may hope to be saved, if she will again be truly Catholic! She may hope to be saved if she will but take heed to the ministers of Him who SAVES the world.

The priesthood is then the safety of France! For without religion society would be destroyed.

Her children, then, owe honor, veneration, gratitude, more than ever to the priestly character. Those who repulse the idea have not the intelligence of our age or country.

Away with these worn-out prejudices, then. Away with these coarse and injurious epithets, with which the blind impiety of Voltaire and his followers have so long assailed the Catholic priesthood!

Let us respect our Priests. If we see imperfections, even vices occasionally, among them, let us remember that we must ascribe to the man all that belongs to frailty.

Let us endeavor, in those cases, not to look at the man, to see nothing but the priest; as a *priest*, he is always worthy of respect, and his ministry is always a holy one; for he is the perpetuator of the office of Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, through successive ages, and it is of him that the Saviour has said, "*He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Him that sent you.*"

FOURTEENTH OBJECTION.

THERE ARE CERTAINLY SOME BAD PRIESTS; HOW CAN THEY BE THE MINISTERS OF GOD?

ANSWER. Because, in becoming bad men, they do not cease to be Priests.

Do you cease to be a Christian, because you commit a sin? Does a judge cease to be a judge, do his decisions cease to have a binding force because his own integrity is not above reproach? Does a father cease to be a father because he fails in his duties? Does a captain lose the right to command his men because he himself commits a breach of discipline?

If it is so in human affairs, where public trusts may, in the strictest sense, be taken away from those who are not worthy of them, how much more stable, more inalienable yet, should not be, in spiritual things, that sacred character of the priesthood on which rests the security of men's consciences, and the whole life of the faithful!

If our Priests ceased to be Priests by the sole fact of committing some grievous sin, we should never know if we really received the holy things from their hands; for God alone knows and searches men's consciences.

It is for us that they are priests; and for us that they remain so, even when they forget their greatness.

FIFTEENTH OBJECTION.

PRIESTS OUGHT TO MARRY. CELIBACY IS CONTRARY TO NATURE.

ANSWER. Not *contrary to nature,* but *above* nature; which is quite different.

Therefore, the chastity of the priest is not *natural,* but *supernatural;* it comes from the grace of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, in the sacrament of holy orders, gives to His ministers a divine character and a *supernatural* virtue which raises them above other men.

God is single and alone; so should His priests be.

"The Great Spirit has no wife," said an Indian chief to an American captain, who proposed to send some Protestant missionaries among them; "His priests should be like Him; since yours are married, we will have nothing to say to them. They resemble ourselves, and would be of no use to us."

JESUS CHRIST, God made man, preserved perfect continence. His envoy should follow the same path. *The disciple is perfect when he resembles his Master.*

It is chastity which surrounds the Priest with his divine halo. It is that which invests him with such a moral power, that he has the right of attacking the vices of his brethern, of counselling not only good, but perfection; of consoling penitents, of penetrating secrets so hidden, that the daughter dares not tell them to

her mother, the wife to her husband, the brother to his brother.

Marry the Priest; the wonder-worker vanishes, *the man alone remains!*

The apologists for the marriage of Priests know this well. They desire only one thing: to *humanize* the Priest, that is to say, to UN-*priest* him.

They see that these men, so uncompromising toward what is wrong, would become the most accommodating in the world, if one could only give them wives and children. Occupied with their own concerns, they would not have much time to occupy themselves with the things which concern God, or attend to the state of their parishioners' consciences.

And, *then,* heavenly things would be treated of quite freely in the family. To obtain the good will of the parish-priest, his *lady* would be flattered, one would sigh at the feet of the eldest *daughter* of his reverence, and admire *before their papa* the talent, the good looks of the whole saintly progeny, even though they were more stupid than blocks and uglier than scarecrows. The *husband-papa-confessor* would not hold out against that, and would grant everything that was asked of him.

Woe to the Priest, and woe to us, if a woman —a wife—touch, in this manner, the spring of his power! For, forthwith, *"a virtue is gone out of him;"* the vivifying virtue which resuscitates souls; the powerful virtue which sustains and encourages them in the ways of God; above all, the virtue of virtues in the priest, that which

makes him the arbiter between the heart of God and the heart of man, the virtue of charity?

Yes; charity—that apostolic charity which embraces all men alike, poor and rich, bad and good, strangers and neighbors—it is Virginity which kindles it and keeps it alive.

Continence must first have consecrated without reserve to the service of God that sacerdotal body which charity daily immolates for the relief and salvation of its neighbor.

He may be humane, he may be compassionate, but never will he be a martyr whose heart is occupied with the love of a woman.

He may be touched by the sorrows of widows and orphans, but never will he devote himself to them, who feels that he owes his first affections and his first savings to the support, the education and the future of his own children.

The morsel of bread which he would, perhaps, take from his own mouth to sustain the starving creature at his door, he would not like to snatch from the hands of his son.

The life which, in times of public disease and contagion, he would sacrifice to the salvation of his fellow-men, he owes and will preserve for his family. What are the most generous of resolutions before the tears of a beloved wife and the caresses of a child?

Marriage is the solemn murder of the Priest. If we desire that our Priests should help us to salvation, let us leave them alone with Jesus Christ. Besides, are they so desirous of marrying? Not the least in the world, I assure you.

Since when have people been obliged to marry against their wills?

SIXTEENTH OBJECTION.

I BELIEVE ONLY WHAT I UNDERSTAND. CAN ANY REASONABLE MAN BELIEVE ALL THE MYSTERIES OF RELIGION?

ANSWER. Then don't believe *any thing,* nothing in the world, not even that you live, that you see, that you speak, that you hear, etc., etc., for I defy you to understand any of these phenomena.

What, in fact, is *life?* what is *language?* what is *sound?* what are *noises, color, smell,* etc.?

What is the *wind?* where does it begin? where and why and how does it stop? What is *cold,* or *heat?* what is *electricity?*

What is *sleep?* How comes it, that when I am asleep, my ears remaining open the same as when I am awake, I hear nothing? Why, and how do I awake from sleep? and what is the process?

What are *fatigue, sorrow, pleasure?* etc. etc.

What is *matter,* that indescribable something, which takes all forms, all colors, etc.?

Who understands what it is?

How is it, that with my eyes, which are merely two little balls, quite black in the inside, I can see all surrounding objects, even millions of miles off (the stars, for instance)?

How is it that my soul would separate from my body if I did not, regularly, cause to enter

into that body, by my food, certain morsels o dead animals, of plants, of vegetables, etc.?

All is *mystery* * in me, even down to the mo vulgar things, to the purely animal functions.

What learned man has ever *comprehende* the why and wherefore of the wonders of nature Who has ever comprehended a single one o them? What *mysteries!*

And I wish to comprehend HIM who has mad all these beings which I cannot comprehend! do not comprehend the creature, and yet I wan to comprehend the Creator! I do not compre hend the finite, and I would comprehend the in finite! I do not comprehend even an acorn, a fly a pebble, and I want to comprehend God and al His precepts!

But it is *absurd!* There is nothing else to answer.

The mysteries of religion are like the sun Impenetrable in themselves, they enlighten and vivify those who walk with simplicity in their radiance: they only blind the audacious eyes which would fathom their splendor.

Mysteries are *above reason,* and not *contrary to reason;* in which there is a great difference. Reason does not perceive, of her unaided

* A mystery is a truth, of which we can with certainty know the existence, but which we cannot understand in itself, save in an imperfect manner.

All things are mystery for the reflecting mind, in nature as well as in religion. It is the stamp of God's handiwork.

strength, the truth which they express; neither does she perceive the impossibility of that truth.

No, faith is not opposed to reason. Far from that, she is her sister and her helper. It is a more brilliant light which comes to add itself to a light already shining.

Faith is to reason what the telescope is to the naked eye. The eye, with the aid of the telescope, sees what it could not perceive alone. It penetrates into regions which are inaccessible without that aid. Will you say that the telescope is opposed to the eyesight?

Such then is faith. It does but regulate and extend reason. Faith leaves to reason its free exercise in all that comes within its range; and when its natural powers have reached their limits, faith comes to its aid, raises it higher, and causes it to penetrate into new supernatural divine truths, even into the secrets of God.

I *believe* the mysteries of religion, then, as I *believe* the mysteries of nature, because I know that they exist.

I know that the mysteries of nature exist, because they are attested by the most unexceptionable witnesses; namely, *all my senses* and *common sense*.

I know that the mysteries of religion exist, because they also are attested by the most unexceptionable witnesses, *Jesus Christ* and *His Church*.* My reason serves me to examine and to weigh the value of their testimony. But when

* See in the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters, the questions of the divinity of Jesus Christ and His Church.

by the touch of philosophy, of criticism, and of good sense, I have examined the facts which prove to me the truth, divinity, and infallibility of these testimonies, my reason has finished its work; faith must take its place, reason has conducted me up to truth. Truth speaks, and I have only to listen, to open my heart, to believe, to adore.

My faith in the Christian mysteries is then supremely reasonable. It proves a solid and logical mind. My reason has said to me: "These witnesses can neither deceive you nor themselves. They bring you THE TRUTH from heaven!" I should not be true to my reason were I not to believe their word.

It is a pitiful weakness of mind to wish to believe only what one comprehends.

SEVENTEENTH OBJECTION.

I WOULD WILLINGLY HAVE FAITH, BUT I CANNOT.

ANSWER. That is a pure illusion, which will not excuse you at the tribunal of the awful Judge, who has declared to us, that "HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM HAS ETERNAL LIFE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES NOT IN HIM IS ALREADY CONDEMNED."

You cannot believe? And what means have you taken to arrive at faith? He who desires the end desires the means also; he who neglects

he means shows evidently that he is not very nxious about the end.

Now, that is your case, if you have not faith. Either you have not adopted the means of obtaining it, or you have not adopted them thoroughly, which comes to nearly the same thing.

1st. *Have you prayed?* It is the first condition of all God's gifts, consequently of faith, which is the most precious of them all, and the fundamental condition. Have you asked of God this grace of faith? How have you asked for it? Have you not asked indifferently, without feeling deeply interested in it; once only, perhaps, and without perseverance? Had you while praying, have you at this present moment, a deep, a sincere, a lively desire to believe and to be a Christian? There are some who ask for virtues, and who are very much afraid of obtaining them.

2d. Have you studied religion with a sincere love of the truth? Have I not seen skeptics *studying* religion in Voltaire, Rousseau, etc.? As well might you try to learn the manners and customs of the United States from the Chinese. *Have you sought out a well-informed priest,* or, at least, a Christian of enlightened belief, to whom to expose your difficulties, and have them solved? Pride is at hand, and often hinders this.

3d. Are you resolved, if God were to give you faith, to live according to its holy and rigid maxims, to combat your passions, to labor for your sanctification, to make to God the sacrifices which He shall demand of you?

Here, with the most part of unbelievers, is the

true reason of their incredulity. It is in the main the heart, it is passion rather than reason which rejects faith as too difficult, too wearisome. "Light has come into the world," said JESUS CHRIST, "and men have preferred darkness rather than light, *because their deeds were evil.*" The heart gets the better of the head. Then all arguments are useless, truth is not to be listened to. *"None are so deaf as those who will not hear,"* says the proverb.

This blindness is voluntary and culpable in its cause; this is why our Lord Jesus Christ declared that all unbelievers are judged beforehand; they have resisted truth.

Be of good faith then in your researches after religious truth; ask God for light with sincerity and perseverance, *lay your doubts before some charitable and enlightened Priest;* be disposed to live according to the faith as soon as the divine light shall illuminate your mind; and I affirm to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you will not fail soon to believe, and to become a good Catholic. "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

EIGHTEENTH OBJECTION.

ALL RELIGIONS ARE GOOD.

ANSWER. All religions are good, in this sense that it is better to have some, of whatever kind it may be, than to have none at all; but not in

the sense that it is quite unimportant whether you profess one or another.

You think, perhaps, provided a man is a worthy member of society, it signifies little whether he be Heathen, Jew, Turk, Christian, Protestant or Catholic; that all religious forms are human inventions, about which our good God must trouble Himself very little.

But tell me, whence have you obtained this notion? And who has revealed to you that all the forms of worship one sees in the world are equally pleasing to the Lord?

Because there are some false religions, does it follow that there is none which is true? If one is surrounded by deceivers, is it no longer possible to discern a real friend?

You have then discovered that God receives with the same love the Christian who adores Jesus Christ, and the Jew who only sees in Him a vile impostor? That it is good and lawful in heathen countries to adore, in the place of the one Supreme God, Jupiter, Mars, Venus? To render divine honors to the sacred crocodiles, and to the ox Apis, in Egypt? To sacrifice, among the Phœnicians, one's children to the god Moloch? In Gaul or Mexico, to immolate hundreds of human victims to the hideous idols there venerated? Elsewhere, to prostrate oneself before a trunk of a tree, before stones, plants, the remains of animals, masses of decay? To repeat from the bottom of the heart at Constantinople, "God is God, and Mohammed is His prophet?" At Rome, in Paris, to abhor

all these false gods, to despise this same Mohammed as an impostor?

It is quite impossible that you believe all this sincerely! That is what you say, however, "All religions are good."

Why not rather have the merit of frankness and own that you do not wish the trouble of seeking for truth, that it is of little consequence to you, and that you look upon it as useless?

The search after religious truth useless? . . . Rash man! Suppose, in direct contradiction to your affirmation, which is supported by nothing, that God has imposed on man an order of determinate homage? Suppose, that among all religions, *one, one only is* THE RELIGION, religious and absolute truth, like all other truth, rejecting all mixture, excluding all which is not ITSELF. To what are you, then, exposing yourself? Do you think that your indifference will excuse you before the tribunal of the sovereign Judge? And can you, without perfect madness, brave such a terrible prospect?

Just see the misery of man without a divine religion! See him with only the pale rays of his reason, abandoned to doubt, often even to the most inevitable, the most perilous ignorance with regard to the fundamental questions of his destinies, his duties, his happiness! From whence do I come? Who am I? Whither am I going? What is my last end? How am I to attain to it? What is there beyond this life? What is God? What does He desire of me, etc., etc.

Now what answer can reason, left to its un-

ided strength, give to these important problems? t stammers, it remains mute; it can offer only probable, possible solutions, a thousand times nsufficient to enable us to surmount the violence of our passions, to sustain us in the rugged path of duty.

And you would be willing to think that the God of all wisdom, of all goodness, of all light, has thus abandoned His reasonable creature, man, the greatest work of His hands?

No, no. He has caused to shine before his eyes a heavenly light, which, corresponding to the imperious wants of his being, reveals to him, with a divine evidence, the nature, and the justice, and the goodness, and the designs of that God who is his first principle and his last end; a light which shows to him the road of good, and the road of evil, both lying open before him, the one leading to eternal joys, the other to eternal punishments; a light which, amidst the false gleamings wherewith human corruption has surrounded it, is distinguished by the sole splendor of its truth; a light which illumines, quickens, perfects all which it penetrates!

And this light is the *Christian Revelation, Christianity,* the only religion which has proofs, the only one which enlightens the reason, which sanctifies the heart, and, referring all our moral perfection to the knowledge and love of God, is worthy of God and of ourselves.

What human tongue could enumerate all the titles that Christianity has to our belief?

Behold it, at the outset, ascend to the very

cradle of the world by the prophecies which a
nounce it, by the faith, the hope, and the love
the holy patriarchs, and by the ceremonies of t
Mosaic and primitive worship which foreshado
it!

It has ever been, in fact, one sole and iden
cal religion, though it has been developed in thr
successive phases.

1st. In the patriarchal religion, which laste
from Adam till the time of Moses;

2d. In the Jewish religion, which Moses pr
mulgated, as sent from God, and which lasted t
the Advent of Jesus Christ;

3d. In the Christian, or Catholic religio
taught by Jesus Christ Himself, and preached b
His Apostles.

It developed itself, from its origin, gradual
and majestically, like all the works of God—lik
man, who passes through the stages of childhood
of adolescence, before arriving at the perfectio
of his age; as the day passes through the stage
of twilight, and dawn, before it shines in its mid
day splendor; as the flower, which is first a mer
germ, next a closed bud, before it discovers th
beauty of its unfolded petals.

And thus Christianity, and *it alone*, embrace
humanity at large; it rules all things, the presen
time, and the ages past and present. It sets ou
from eternity to return again to the bosom o
eternity. It proceeds from God only to repos
eternally in God!

All in it is worthy of its author. All in it i
TRUTH and SANCTITY. And those who study i

discover in it a marvellous harmony, a beauty, a grandeur, an evidence of truth; and these ever increasing and growing in proportion as they examine its dogmas.

It touches and purifies the heart, at the same time that it enlightens the mind. It fills the whole man.

The sublime, superhuman and incomparable character of JESUS CHRIST, its founder;

The divine perfection of His life;

The sanctity of His law;

The practical sublimity of the doctrine which He taught;

His language, which is absurd, if it is not divine;

The number and evidence of His miracles, recognized even by His most violent enemies;

The power of His Cross;

The events of His ineffable Passion, all foretold beforehand;

His glorious Resurrection, announced at fourteen different times by Him to His disciples, and the unbelief even of His Apostles, whom actual evidence compelled to believe in the truth of the Resurrection of their Master;

His ascension into heaven, in the sight of more than five hundred witnesses;

The supernatural development of His Church, in spite of so many natural impossibilities, both physical and moral;

The resplendent miracles which accompanied, all over the earth, the teachings of the apostles, ignorant and timid fishermen, changed suddenly into doctors and conquerors of the world;

The superhuman strength of His nine millions of martyrs;

The genius of the Fathers of the Church crushing all errors, by the mere exposition of the Christian faith;

The holy lives of true Christians, opposed to the corruption and natural weakness of men:

The social transformation which Christianity has operated, and still in our day operates, in all the countries where it penetrates;

Finally, its duration, the immutability of its dogmas, of its constitution, of its Catholic hierarchy; its indissoluble unity in the midst of the empires which are crumbling away, of societies which are daily changing; all show us that the finger of God is here, and that it is not in the power of man to conceive, to create, or to preserve a similar work.

There is then, you see, *a true religion,* ONE ONLY, the Christian religion.

It alone is RELIGION, that is to say, the sacred tie which attaches us to God, our Creator and Father.

It is the only one which transmits to us true religious doctrine, that which God teaches us with regard to Himself, His nature, and works, with regard to ourselves, our eternal destinies, our moral duties.

All other pretended religions, which teach what Christianity rejects, and reject what Christianity teaches, Paganism, Judaism,* Mohammedanism,

* With regard to the Jewish religion, there is a special difficulty; for having been, according to God's de-

whatsoever they may be called, are then false, and, consequently, bad.

They are human inventions, while religion is a divine institution. They are only sacrilegious imitations of true religion, as false coin is the dishonest imitation of the genuine.

Would it not be preposterous to say, "All pieces of money *are good,*" without distinguishing the real from the counterfeit?

It would be more preposterous still to repeat henceforth that phrase of which we have just been proving the folly, "All religions are good."

Either it is a piece of heinous impiety, or of prodigious absurdity; of impiety, if said from indifference; of folly, if from ignorance or heedlessness.

signs, the preparation for the advent of the Messiah, and as the second phase of true religion, it *was, but since Jesus Christ it is no longer,* the true religion. Judaism was like the scaffolding of the mason, necessary to construct the edifice. The house once finished, the scaffolding should be removed; it is no longer more than a useless and troublesome obstacle.

The headstrong Jew has left the house for the scaffolding; he has sacrificed the reality to the figure. Since the advent of the Messiah, without temple, altars, sacrifices, the Jewish people, dispersed in the world carries with it its own corpse-like religion; it subsists through all ages, according to the prediction of Jesus Christ, to serve as a perpetual witness to Christianity, as the shadow of a body proves its subsistance.

NINETEENTH OBJECTION.

IS JESUS CHRIST ANYTHING MORE THAN A GREAT PHILOSOPHER, A GREAT BENEFACTOR OF MANKIND, A GREAT PROPHET? IS HE REALLY GOD?

ANSWER. Listen to His own reply.

"YES, YOU HAVE SAID IT, I AM GOD. *What! so long a time have I been with you; and have you not known me?* HE THAT SEETH ME, SEETH THE FATHER ALSO; I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE!!!" *

One would require a whole book to treat this question as it deserves. We have already touched upon it, in proving the divinity of the Christian religion. However, we must press it further, and develop a point on which our whole faith reposes.

JESUS CHRIST is the Hero of the Gospel †

And first, mark the gigantic proportions of that figure, compared to all others, even to the greatest! All other men *quite die;* they make a noise during their passage, they disturb the world

* St. Matthew xxvi. 63, 64; St. Mark xiv. 61, 62; St. Luke xxii. 70; St. John xiv. 10.

† The *Gospel* is the history of Jesus, written by eye-witnesses in presence of other eye-witnesses, the Jews and the early Christians, recounted by the most holy of men, the Apostles, who let themselves be put to death to attest the truth of their words.

The mere study of the Gospels is the best proof of their truth. The unbeliever Rousseau himself owned: "*It is not thus that people invent,*" he said, "*the inventor of such a book would be only more astonishing than its hero.*"

. . . and after them, what remains of it all? Their names, lauded or scorned at first, becoming indifferent after a time, are finally buried in the pages of some books. They no longer *live* on the earth.

Jesus Christ ALONE lives still, lives always, lives everywhere. He is present to the world. To-day, as much as 1900 years ago; in Paris, in London, in Rome, in St. Petersburgh, in Asia, in America, everywhere, He is adored or hated; in all countries He is defended and attacked, received and rejected, as in the days of His mortal life. He is at the bottom of all those great movements which cause the world to shake; He is the chief question, the centre in which meet all the questions which touch the heart of humanity.

He lives, He speaks, He commands, He teaches, He forbids; He develops His all-powerful existence in Christianity, of which He is the principle, the soul, and the summary. The fate of the one is the fate of the other; for Christianity is the sequel of the life of Jesus Christ in the universe, throughout all the ages.

Then JESUS CHRIST is a universal, continuous, actual fact, acting these nineteen centuries past, written upon the human generations, upon all countries, upon all peoples of the world, in living characters. It is an exceptional life which penetrates the whole world. All passes away, all dies around him; HE ALONE, HE ALONE lives and endures! "Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and the same for *ever*." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

He is, then, something more than a mere man, and the great Napoleon was right when he said,

"I have had experience of men, and I tell you that THIS ONE was more than a man."

2d. And, stranger still, and peculiar to Jesus Christ alone, the existence which has filled the universe since its first apparition on earth, filled with the same omnipotence the ages which preceded it, even up to the birth of the world. This same JESUS, for whom have lived, do live, and ever will live, the Christian generations, it is for Him that the generations of the ancient faithful, the disciples of Moses, the prophets, and the patriarchs have lived! It is in HIM they have hoped; it is for HIM that they have looked; *it is* HE whom they have so loved! The sun, in his meridian, bathes in his rays all space, that which he has passed in his course, and that which he has yet to travel through; so Jesus Christ, the centre of humanity, enlightens, quickens all things, the past, the present, and the future.

3d. Jesus Christ, and He alone, is the type of perfection, the model after which the moral civilized world is formed, the mould into which humanity casts itself, as it were, to reform its vices. What else is virtue but the imitation of JESUS CHRIST?

There is nothing in common between Him and any other known type of perfection, whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman. He is *Himself,* He is *alone,* He is *without a parallel,* He is above all.

In human perfection, there is always competition, one man surpasses another, *parallels* may always exist. Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, is the exception. There is a solution of

continuity between His perfection and that of human beings.

What name can be placed beside His? Whom would one venture to compare to Him? The saints, who are the heroes of virtue on earth, are but His pale copies.

None think, none have ever thought to *equal* Him; for they feel that it is no longer a question of possible rivalry. All is effaced in His light, as the factitious lights of the earth become pale when the sun bursts forth in all its splendor. He has also said this Himself, "*I am the* LIGHT *of the world.*"

And this superhuman perfection is a phenomenon without antecedents, it is preceded by nothing, prepared by nothing. It arrives like the doctrine it teaches, all created. It participates in no theological or philosophical school; it is without a cause, producing or explaining it, unless it is the presence of PERFECTION itself, which is God. It gives light to all things, and receives light from nothing; it is the concentration of all light.

Another observation not less striking, and peculiar to Jesus alone: with Him, this truly divine perfection, which seems so much elevated above humanity, inaccessible to our weakness, is nevertheless the most practical, the most imitable, the most fruitful, the only one fruitful in imitators and disciples. It proposes itself for imitation to all men, to the child and the aged man, to the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich, to the beginner as much as to him who has long persevered. It seems made for each one in par-

ticular. It adapts itself to all, and reforms all; it is perfection for all!

Who does not discern here the stamp of Divinity? Can man do any thing of all this?

Finally, the last trait of the perfection of Jesus Christ; *superhuman,* like all the other traits, and, like all the others, *peculiar to Him alone,* His perfection is WITHOUT EXCESS.

Man always carries his good qualities to excess. Feeling himself weak, he prefers, from fear of failing, to exceed even in good.

St. Vincent de Paul was humble, but he appears to carry to excess his low opinion of himself; St. Charles was austere, but his austerity appears alarming to us; St. Francis was poor, but his self-imposed privations are almost carried too far, etc.; human weakness pierces through the heroism of their virtues. In Jesus Christ, the good is perfectly true and genuine; nothing is extravagant; the perfection of the divine nature is made manifest, and blends itself with the real and virtuous emotions of human nature. In Him all the man appears. The God and the man are complete.

And on this account, this Model so perfect never causes any to despair; on the contrary, it is sweet, mild, and amiable; it is the reality of a virtue, both perfect and possible, proposed for imitation to mankind by a God-man, as truly man as He is God.

What a singular and marvellous fact? What a prodigy is JESUS CHRIST! . . . Who would not exclaim: "Behold the finger of God!"

4th. And His doctrine! And that word, which, during eighteen centuries that it has been meditated on, discussed, attacked, dissected by every variety of knowledge, by the most profound geniuses, has excited all kinds of hatred, been applied to communities, nations, individuals, has never been convicted of error! "It ever remains the light of the world;" and each attempt to destroy it does but verify what the Master predicted. "*Heaven and earth shall pass away,* BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

Wherever this doctrine is known, it penetrates civilization, moral and intellectual life, progress, enlightenment; where it does not reign, and in proportion as it is less and less known, degradation, lethargy, barbarism, death, mark its absence.

It is this doctrine, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which has founded our modern society; which has become the guide, the directing torch of human reason and philosophy; and whether voluntarily or involuntarily, it is with the very means that Jesus Christ has given them, that unbelieving Christians argue against Him.

"*Never man,*" said the Jews, "*spake as did this man!*" Open the gospel, in fact. What unheard-of power! What authority! What calmness! What celestial simplicity it manifests! . . . Jesus teaches what He sees, what He knows. He does not argue; He does not seek to prove, to convince; His word is sufficient for Him; He is sure, He affirms. None but God made man, and speaking to men, can use such language.

Furthermore, the word of Jesus Christ proves

its own divine origin, for it unceasingly affirms His divinity.

He calls Himself *God,* the *Son of God,* Christ, the Truth, the Life, the Saviour, the Messiah.*

"If thou art the Christ," said the Jews to Him, "tell us." *"I speak to you,"* He answered them, *"and you do not believe Me. The miracles that I do in the name of My Father bear witness of Me. I and My Father are one."* They desired to stone Him, instead of believing these words: "Why would you stone Me?" said Jesus to them.

"Because of Thy blasphemy, and because, *being man, Thou makest Thyself God."*

The woman of Samaria spoke to Him of Christ, the Redeemer, who should save mankind, and teach them all truth. "I AM HE," said He to her, *"I who speak to thee."*

Another time He is teaching the assembled crowd: "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will . . . that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father. He who honoreth not

* By *"Son of God"* Jesus Christ did not mean, nor did the Jews to whom He spoke understand him to mean, *a just man, a child of God, a friend of God.* He meant, and they understood thereby, *the divine Word,* the second person of the holy Trinity, the eternal and only Son of God, God, like the Father and the Holy Ghost. Therefore, when Jesus told Caiaphas that He was *"the Son of God,"* the high priest and the Pharisees cried out, *He blasphemeth,* and condemned Him to death as a blasphemer, because *He made Himself God.* Therefore, they understood His meaning perfectly well, namely, that He was God.

the Son, honoreth not the Father who hath sent Him." (John. v. 21.)

"*God so loved the world, that He gave* HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, *so that all who believe in Him may not perish, but may have eternal life . . . God sent* HIS SON *into the world, that the world might be saved by Him.*"

"*He who believes in Him shall not be condemned,* BUT HE WHO BELIEVES NOT IS ALREADY JUDGED, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT BELIEVE IN THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD."

He has just healed the man born blind; the latter, driven from the synagogues by the Pharisees, because he declared that his benefactor was at least a prophet, finds Him, and throws himself at His feet. "Do you believe in the Son of God?" Jesus asks him. "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" "THOU HAST BOTH SEEN HIM, AND IT IS HE THAT TALKETH WITH THEE." And the poor man answers, "I believe, Lord!" and, prostrating himself, he adores Him.

Is this enough, or will you hear more?

"Abraham, your father," said He to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day, he saw it, and was glad."

The Jews answered, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" *

Jesus said to them, "BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM."

To the sister of Lazarus, who comes to beseech Him to raise her brother to life, He saith: "*I*

*Abraham lived twenty centuries before Jesus Christ.

am THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. *He who believes in Me shall live,* even after death. And whosoever lives in *Me and believes* in Me, shall not die eternally. Do *you believe?*" "Yes, Lord," answers the faithful Martha; "I BELIEVE THAT THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, WHO ART COME INTO THE WORLD."

And a short time afterward, when He had come before the already putrid corpse of Lazarus, he adds these divine words, "My Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I know that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it: *that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*"

And He cried aloud, "Lazarus, come forth!" And the dead arose, yet bound—face, hands and feet—with the cerements of the grave! . . .

One might cite the whole of the gospels. Read, above all, the ineffable discourse before the Last Supper (St. John, xiv. 6th and following verses), "I AM," said He, "THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. *No man cometh to the Father but by Me. If you had known Me, you would, without doubt, have known My Father also.* HE THAT SEETH ME SEETH THE FATHER ALSO."

"*Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If any one love Me, he will keep my word, and My Father will love him, and* WE *will come to him, and make our abode with him.*"

Even upon the cross, Jesus Christ affirms that He is God, and speaks as God. The good thief,

crucified beside Him, enlightened by faith, exclaims: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." "This day," Jesus answers, "thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

Finally—for I must limit myself—the unbelieving Thomas sees Him, and touches Him after the resurrection; convinced by this evidence, he falls at His feet, and exclaims, "*My Lord and* MY GOD!" Far from blaming him for this expression, Jesus approves of it: "Because thou hast seen, Thomas," said He to him, "*thou hast believed.* BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED!"

Mark what language! what a manner of acting! what omnipotence! How He causes Himself to be called *God!* How He has the tone and the accent of God! How He claims the right of divinity, faith, adoration, prayer, love, sacrifice!

Now, the inference to be drawn from all this is very simple, *either Jesus Christ speaks the truth, or that which is not the truth. There is no medium here.*

1st. If He speaks the truth, He is what He calls Himself, He is God. He is the eternal Son of the living God, blessed from all ages, and all His words, His actions, His miracles, His triumphs, are easily explained. Nothing is impossible to a God.

2d. If He does not speak the truth, He is either a madman or an impostor (a blasphemy I hardly dare write, though it be to confound it).

A *madman,* if He has not the conscious control of His own words and actions—*a detestable*

impostor, if he utters falsehood with a knowledge of what he is doing.

Will you dare to say this? Jesus Christ, the perfection of wisdom, a madman ! ! ! Jesus Christ, the most virtuous, the most holy of men, a liar, a sacrilegious impostor ! ! !

One must have lost his reason, and his moral sense, to put forth such insanity.

THEN HE IS GOD.

Jesus Christ stands before human reason, as He stood before Caiaphas on the day of His Passion. "I adjure thee," said the high priest to Him, "*in the name of the living God, to tell us if Thou art the Christ, the Son of God?*" Jesus answered, "THOU HAST SAID IT. I AM HE."

Either one must believe or disbelieve this affirmation; there is no medium possible.

Either one must admit JESUS CHRIST in the most unqualified manner, or reject Him entirely. "Whoever is not for Him is against Him," whosoever does not adore Him, cannot, without being foolish and inconsistent, praise, admire, or laud Him as a *wise* or *great Man,* or as a *Saint.*

"But, perhaps," some one will say, "He only called Himself God to advance His doctrines with greater readiness?"

The difficulty remains entire; because no intention, however good, could possibly excuse such a huge and continuous imposture, and one would be obliged no less to conclude that the whole life of Jesus Christ, having been the affirmation of His divinity, was nothing but a tissue of madness and blasphemies.

But apart from this reason, the supposition is absolutely inadmissible. In fact:

1. Such a fiction, in the first place, would have destroyed His whole work, and annihilated all His doctrines. JESUS CHRIST has but one end in view, that of destroying idolatry, and re-establishing the universal *reign of truth; by truth* to restore virtue and holiness on earth; render to God that which belongs to God alone, the heart of man, his faith, his self-devotion, his love. With this thought, could He, unless He were really God, assume the divine title and claim its rights, without ruining fundamentally His whole design?

2. This pretended *means,* designed to support His doctrines, would precisely have been their greatest foe.

The *impossible* part, humanly speaking, of the preaching of Jesus Christ and of His apostles, was chiefly the inducing the nations to admit the divinity of that Jesus, poor, humiliated, a Man of sorrows, who died on a cross. Is it not this which is the most repugnant to reason in the Christian teaching? Is not this precisely the stumbling-block of the unbeliever? And is it such a means that Jesus Christ would have chosen to insure the adoption of His religion? But that would have been the height of folly! How strange a bait is that which terrifies a hundred times more than the hook itself!

The divinity of Jesus Christ once admitted, I conceive that it becomes a powerful means of inducing belief in His doctrines. But how could this hypothesis have been generally admitted?

and how, without some *evident* and *irresistible* manifestation of divine omnipotence, could JESUS CHRIST have been regarded as God!

It would not require the period of two thousand years for the wise and learned ones of the world to expose and confound an impostor, and to impose perpetual silence on his followers. But no genius has ever brought forth any accepted proof that Jesus Christ was an Impostor.

Abraham Lincoln once very wisely said: "You can fool some people all the time, and you can fool all the people sometimes, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

Even Josephus, the Jewish Historian, pays the following beautiful tribute to the divinity of Christ: "Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."—The Works of Flavius Josephus, page 364.

No, no; I repeat it; in the presence of the superhuman character of JESUS CHRIST, in the presence of His words, His affirmations, His

actions, and of His work, which is Christianity, there is for a reasonable and sincere man but one course to adopt; it is to fall at His feet, and adore the infinite love of a God, who has so loved the world that He has given to it His only Son, and to exclaim with St. Thomas in his regenerated faith, "My Lord and MY GOD! Dominus meus et DEUS MEUS!"

TWENTIETH OBJECTION.

IT IS BETTER TO BE A PROTESTANT THAN A CATHOLIC; ONE IS JUST AS MUCH A CHRISTIAN, AND IT IS NEARLY THE SAME THING.

ANSWER. Yes, nearly; just as it is nearly the same thing for one person to say that two and two make four, and for another to say two and two make five; but it is not quite the same thing, as you will see in the result of long banking accounts. As mathematical truths must be exact in principle, and cannot contradict each other, so religious truths, the teachings of divine faith, the conditions of gaining heaven, must be one in principle, and not contradictory. "*One body* and one Spirit; as you are called in *one hope* of your calling. One Lord, *one faith,* one baptism." (Ephes. iv. 4.)

It is an easy matter for you to learn that there is and can be only one true religion. We have proved that this one true religion is the Catholic religion established by Jesus Christ.

Now, what the Catholic Church affirms, the Protestant denies.

The Catholic has, for his rule of faith, the infallible teaching of the Church. The Protestant rejects the Church, despises Her authority, and acknowledges only the Bible, which he interprets as he can, and as he likes.

The Catholic derives a Christian life from the seven Sacraments of the Church, and maintains it principally by means of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. The Protestant does not recognize those sacraments; he has preserved only baptism, and even of that he has altered the notion. *

The Catholic adores, in the Holy Eucharist, JESUS CHRIST, who is really present in it. The Protestant sees in it only an empty symbol, a fragment of bread.

The Catholic venerates, invokes, and loves the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, made man. The Protestant shows an invincible indifference to her, which is often pushed even to hatred and scorn.

The Catholic venerates, in the Pope, the Vicar of JESUS CHRIST, the head of the faithful, their supreme pastor, and the infallible Doctor of the law of God. The Protestant sees in him only the Antichrist, the vicar of Satan, and the enemy of truth, etc., etc., etc.

* The author speaks here from the Catholic point of view, as it is with bad Catholics he is arguing. Protestants think they retain the Eucharist, under the name of the Supper; but the writer does not consider that they retain it in reality.

Protestantism is to Catholicism what *no* is to *yes,* and that too in the fundamental points of religion. But for this discordance, however, they are precisely the same thing, are they?

"*It is better,*" you said, "*to be a Protestant than a Catholic.*" No. For that only is *best,* or, rather, that only is *good,* which is *true.* The rest is worth nothing.

Start, then, from this evident principle. *There is no medium between truth and error.* That which is not true is false, and that which is not false is true.

In religion, this principle is still more important than in any other matter. There is only one true religion; we have seen this, and it is the religion of JESUS CHRIST, which embraces all ages, all nations, all men, and which, for this reason, has always been called *Catholic* or *universal.*

The Protestant sects are not this one Catholic religion of JESUS CHRIST; the name itself shows it: protest'ant; *consequently,* theirs is not the true religion; it is an error, a protest, a corruption of Christianity. This of itself would be sufficient to condemn Protestantism. But let us examine still further.

JESUS CHRIST, the founder of Christianity, is the only Master of Christianity. No one has ever denied it. "I am the way, the truth and the life."

No man has then the right of teaching or preaching this religion, if he is not charged to

do so by Jesus Christ. "How shall they preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. x. 15.)

Suppose I were to say to you: "My friend, you are a Christian. The Christian religion teaches you such and such doctrines, imposes upon you such and such duties! Well! I have come to reform all that. Instead of believing, as you have hitherto done, believe what I teach you; I release you from such and such of your duties which are irksome, I permit you to do what your religion forbids," etc.

You would certainly reply: "But who are you, to do that? My religion has but one master, JESUS CHRIST. Is it he who has sent you? When, and in what manner? Prove to me your divine mission."

Well, when M. Chatel, Michael Vintras, and Company, in our own times, and Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Henry VIII., three hundred years ago, set themselves up as Reformers of the Christian Religion, this objection, suggested by the most ordinary common sense, might have arrested them at the first step.

Many persons have addressed these questions to them; they have never been able to answer them;* and the evil passions of humanity have alone caused their new religion to be received.

* Calvin was very desirous on one occasion of performing *a miracle*, to reply to the difficulty suggested. Unfortunately, he set to work very foolishly, or rather, I should say, God frustrated his measures. He had bribed a man to counterfeit a dead person so as to pretend to raise him up to life. On his arrival with his

"The principles of the Reformation are things to be repented of with tears and ashes." This interesting statement comes not from a Catholic, but from a member of the Anglican Church—Lord Halifax.

It is, then, only those whom JESUS CHRIST has sent, who are entitled to teach His religion. But these envoys of heaven, these doctors, the *only lawful* doctors of religion, these *lawful* pastors of Christian nations, who are they? How can they be recognized? By means of two very simple observations.

The first is a great historical fact, so self-evident, that candid Protestants do not even think of denying it, it is this: that the Pope, the actual Bishop of Rome, is the Head of the Catholic Religion, and that he is descended by an uninterrupted succession of Pontiffs from the Apostle Saint Peter; that from all ages Catholic Bishops have been regarded as the successors of the Apostles.

The second, is the explanation of this fact by the mere reading of those passages in the Gospel where our Lord Jesus Christ gives to His Apostles, and *to them alone,* the sacred mission to preach His religion to all mankind, and chooses among the apostles themselves, Saint Peter, to be the Head of the whole Church,

friends, the justice of God had struck his accomplice, who was *really* dead in his bed.

Luther became furious when the proofs of his mission were demanded of him. He replied by calling the indiscreet questioner an ass, a pig, a dog, a Turk possessed by a devil, etc.

the bond of unity between the pastors and the faithful, the immutable foundation of the living edifice that He should raise up.

What, I ask, can be more clear, more solemn than this pastoral and doctrinal mission of the apostles? "RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST," said the Son of God to them; "AS MY FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO SEND I YOU. GO, TEACH ALL NATIONS; *baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Preach the Gospel to all men.*" "BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU EVEN TO THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL AGES. HE WHO HEARS YOU HEARS ME, AND HE WHO DESPISES YOU DESPISES ME." *

And do not these words also of the Lord to St. Peter, bear their evidence with them?

"*Thou art Peter,* AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I WILL GIVE TO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN." † By these words, according to the belief of all Christian ages, was St. Peter established by Jesus Christ as Head, immutable foundation-stone, infallible doctor, and pastor of His whole Church and of all His disciples.

It is hardly necessary to argue on these words, so clear and obvious is their meaning.

1. There is a Christian Church, since Jesus Christ said: *My Church.*

* Last chapters of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark.

† St. Matthew xvi.

2. There is *but one Church;* for He does not say: My *Churches,* but *My* CHURCH.

3. And among all those Churches which call themselves the one only Church, which is the true, the only true one? That founded on St. Peter, governed by St. Peter, taught by St. Peter, who still lives in his successor; and therefore, the Roman Catholic Church, of which the Pope, St. Peter's successor, is the Pontiff and the Head, is that Church.

What is simpler than this mode of reasoning? It once proved powerful enough to convince a Protestant, to whom I suggested it (and who became a Catholic that very day), it also effected the conversion of a Russian lady, a schismatic.

On the point of ascending to heaven, the Saviour insisted anew, and confirmed what he had given to St. Peter, saying to him: "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep." (St. John, last chapter.)

It is, then, to the Pope and the Bishops, the actual Pastors of the Catholic Church, who alone trace their origin in unbroken succession from St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and to the Apostles, that these great promises of Jesus Christ are addressed; it is to *them alone* that the mission of teaching, preaching, and preserving religion was given; it is they, and *they alone,* who are the legitimate pastors of Christian nations. With them, and *with them alone,* JESUS CHRIST will be to the end of all ages, to keep them free from all error in their

teaching, and from all defect in the sanctification of souls.*

It is, then, by submitting to their authority, and in attending to their teaching, that I am certain of knowing and practicing the true Christian Religion.

And here take notice of the immense advantages of that clear, infallible, divine *path of authority*, in which the Catholic Church invites us to walk. How easy it is for a Catholic to know, with absolute certainty, what he ought to believe, what he ought to avoid, so as to be a good Christian! He has but to hearken to the priest, sent by his Bishop, who is in communion with the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, His visible substitute on earth, by whom He teaches, and by whom He decides in a sovereign manner what we must believe, do and avoid.

How beautiful and how simple is this! Remark, too, what *perfect* UNITY flows from this authority! Everywhere the same faith, the same doctrine; in Rome, in Paris, in China, in Asia, Africa, America, everywhere the same real religious teaching, that of the Vicar of JESUS CHRIST Himself! Everywhere the same Priesthood, of which the Pope is the visible, and JESUS CHRIST the invisible Head! Everywhere the same sacrifice, the same worship, the same sacraments, the same means of sanctification and of salvation.

* This is what is called the *infallibility* of the Church; it is the infallibility of Jesus Christ, of God Himself, which has been bestowed on it.

This unity is so much the more beautiful and superhuman, that the Christian community governed by the Pope (and it alone) extends *all over the earth.*

There are Catholics everywhere. Their very name indicates this fact (it was the remark of St. Augustine, fifteen hundred years ago:) *Catholic* means *universal.* The Catholic Church embraces all ages, all countries, all nations. And the last judgment will be, as our Lord JESUS CHRIST declared, when the Catholic Church shall have preached the gospel to all the nations of the earth.*

Wherever the Catholic Church prevails, she shows forth Christian *sanctity.* She produces invariably, and in all places, the most sublime perfection in those who receive her teaching with docility. She is the mother of the saints. She has not ceased to give birth to them during nineteen centuries, nor to behold JESUS CHRIST, her God and Founder, confirming by miracles the sanctity of His servants. †

PROTESTANTISM, on the contrary (as the name alone causes us to anticipate), is a *disorganization* of all this order and harmony, under the pretext of reform. There is revolt in the very name.

Split into a thousand petty sects, who mutually anathematize each other, and who agree only in their common hatred to the ancient Church: Lutherans, Calvinists, Zwinglians, Anabaptists, Pedobaptists, Moravians, Evan-

* St. Matthew xxiv. 14. † See chapter xxxvii.

gelicals, Anglicans, Quakers, Pietists, Methodists, Jumpers, Shakers, etc. (there are more than six hundred of these sects), Protestantism is nothing but religious anarchy.

It has attacked Christianity even in its essence and constitution. It has rejected the fundamental rule of faith, which is the infallible teaching and the divine authority of the Pope and the Bishops, the only lawful pastors and doctors. And thus, while talking loudly of *faith,* it has destroyed *faith,* that is to say the SUBMISSION of the mind and heart to divine teaching. The Protestant, in fact, believes only his own interpretation of the Word of God; he makes himself the judge in controversies, in the stead of those whom Jesus Christ instituted as judges; he believes in his reason, not in the word of God, which he reads in the Bible; he has no *real belief* he has only *opinions,* as liable to change as himself, and he no longer believes anything but his own opinions. Thus are there as many religions as there are heads among Protestants. And even every head may alter its religion every day. I know a very respectable Protestant family, consisting of four persons, where each one is of a different religion! ! !

For this reason, Protestantism is tossed about with every wind of doctrine, changes every year, every day, the symbol of its faith. It rejects to-day what it taught yesterday; it has neither unity, antiquity, universality, nor stability.

I defy any Protestant to tell me plainly what is *truth,* and what the world ought to believe,

under pain of being considered out of the road of Christian truth.

"You differ," said Tertullian once to Montan, "therefore you err."

Protestantism produces virtues, because it has preserved some vestiges of truth amidst the destruction it made; but these virtues bear the mark of this mixture of truth and error. They are almost always cold and proud, like those of the Pharisees. They exist, *in spite of Protestantism.* In reality they are *Catholic,* they belong to the Church. The more Protestants are Protestants, the less have they of real Christian virtues; the nearer they resemble us, the more real and living are their virtues. It has been said with justice of Protestant England, that of all the sects she was "the least deformed, because she was *the least reformed.*" *

Protestantism rejects all that is consoling, tender, and affectionate in religion; the holy

* For the last twenty-five or thirty years, honest and religious Protestants have shown a singular tendency to draw nearer to the Catholic Church. Their religion has nothing but its name. They imitate us in a variety of ways; they have adopted our way of preaching, and their ministers have not nearly so much the habit of inveighing, as formerly, against the Church; many take the name of *Catholics,* some invoke the Blessed Virgin, and believe in the Mass, etc. It is good sense and truth which thus gradually overcome the prejudices of childhood and sectarianism.

There is in Chicago a Protestant (Episcopalian) paper advocating the Rosary; and hundreds of Protestants are now saying the Rosary, and showing respect and devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

presence of JESUS CHRIST in the Sacrament of His love for us; the tribunal of mercy and pardon, the love and invocation of the Blessed Virgin MARY, that gentle mother of the Saviour whom He gave us for a Mother at the hour of His death; the invocation of the Saints, our elder brethren, our friends, already entered into that land, whither they call us, and where they await our coming, etc.

It has no religious *worship*, properly so-called, for one could not give that name to that which passes in the great bare room which they call their *Church*.

Have you ever been into one of these? One might fancy, at first, that these are assemblies filled with the spirit of religion. But only look closer; there is not the real Presence of God, there; *His love*, above all, is not felt. . . . One remembers that the Pharisees were more regular than the others in frequenting the synagogues!

The fundamental vice of Protestantism is revolt, pride.

It is, besides, sterile in saints. It has never produced *one real sister of charity*, that is to say, one humble and loving servant of God and of His poor. Its zeal is fanatical, its fervent adherents are visionaries, vague mystics, who believe themselves filled with the Holy Spirit, and to whom this supposed Spirit often reveals very strange things.

Its missionaries are Bible distributers. . . . Only compare them to the apostles, or to our Catholic missionaries, heirs of the zeal, charity,

hardships, and sufferings of the apostles, as they are heirs of their faith! What a difference!

Its *ministers* preach without having a mission. They are gentlemen, dressed in black, and preaching a moral anodyne which may be thus summed up: "Read the Bible, and do as you think right always provided you do not become Catholics."

What is their right to teach others? Some of them own that they are nothing but ordinary men, as all *Christian men* are *priests,* and according to some, all *Christian women also.* . . . By what authority do they come and interpret the Word of God to their brethren? Are they infallible? Since all Christian religion is comprised in the reading of the Bible, why do they mix up their human language in the matter?

These men with wives are no longer the *men of God,* the Church's bridegrooms, the men of devotion, sacrifice, charity, chastity, perfection. . . .

Thus—to sum up—opposed to the express words of Jesus Christ; opposed to the historical tradition of all past ages; opposed to the idea of fixity, unity, perfection, inseparable from the work of a God—the Protestant sects, born, even the oldest, about three hundred years back, the newest composed, altered, augmented, and restored under our own eyes, in this age—are not, and cannot be that one, holy, universal, community, or Church, of the disciples of Jesus Christ, *established and constituted* NINETEEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO, *by the apostles* of that Divine Master.

I could yet add other proofs; I might show the absolute impossibility of proving the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and especially of the Gospels, without the infallible authority of the Church; I might point out the absurdities which Protestants are obliged to accept when they are logical, and desire to remain true to their principles; the hidden, but consequent connection existing between Protestant principles and the anarchical doctrines of revolutionists, etc. What I have said, however, is quite sufficient.*

To be a *Christian,* then, it is not enough to believe that JESUS CHRIST is God, but we must also believe all that He has revealed to us.

Therefore, *to be a Christian and a Catholic,* is to be one and the same thing.

Therefore, out of the Catholic Church, there is no real Christianity, and as St. Cyprian, bishop and martyr, proclaimed *seventeen hundred years ago*: "NONE CAN HAVE GOD FOR HIS FATHER, WHO WILL NOT HAVE THE CHURCH FOR MOTHER."

* One remarkable observation is, that one has NEVER seen a good Catholic, well instructed in his faith and of sincere piety, become a Protestant in order to lead a better life; while those Protestants who become Catholics are generally the most pious, enlightened, and respectable persons, according to the testimony of their Protestant brethren.

Often (and now-a-days more than ever) Protestants have become Catholics *at the moment of their death;* NEVER did a Catholic change his faith at this awful hour, when truth alone stands face to face with the soul to judge it.

This observation would alone suffice to decide the question which now occupies us, and to make us conclude in favor of the truth of the only Catholic religion.

Therefore, a Protestant who knows the true Church, the Roman Catholic Church, governed by the Pope, *is obliged to return to it under pain of losing his own soul.* In religion, more than in any thing else, we are bound to quit error as soon as we recognize it, and adhere to truth.

Therefore, finally, it is no more true to say, "I may be a Catholic, a Protestant, a Schismatic, without ceasing to be a Christian," than to say, "I may be a Turk, heathen, Jew, or Christian, without ceasing to belong to the true religion." *

TWENTY-FIRST OBJECTION.

PROTESTANTS HAVE THE SAME GOSPEL THAT WE HAVE.

ANSWER. They have the letter; they have not the spirit.

"Now, the letter killeth," said the apostle St. Paul, "but the spirit giveth life." The letter of

* We are not afraid to press the subject of Protestantism a little strongly, on account of a sort of propagandism which has been of late revived by Protestant ministers in various countries. In Paris particularly, they have divided the city into sections, and they bestir themselves greatly to found schools, and attract to them the children of the working classes.

There is besides a latent connection between Protestant principles and those revolutionary doctrines which agitate France. The father of our anarchists was Calvin, and the father of Calvin was the Tempter himself, one may almost say, "*Vos ex patre diabolo estis.*" "I will not submit myself." *Non serviam.* It is the motto of them all.

Holy Scripture kills the Protestants, as that of the prophecies killed the Jews; because, like the Jews, the Protestants reject the sacred teaching of those whom *God sends to explain the letter*. The Jews rejected the teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles, and they are lost; Protestants reject the teaching of the lawful Pastors of the Church, and they are in the way to be lost.

The Church was before the Scripture. The Church is the divine institution founded by Jesus Christ, to preserve, explain, preach, defend, and practically apply Christian revelation, and, consequently, the Holy Scripture, the principal part of that revelation.

It is the Church, and the Church alone, that teaches us *infallibly*, in the name, and by the authority of JESUS CHRIST, the divine inspiration of the holy books. It is she alone that distinguishes them in a sovereign manner from the books which were not inspired. It is she alone that decides the true meaning of obscure or contested passages, by the light of the same Spirit which inspired the books themselves. It is from her, indeed, that Protestants have received those books.

Without the Church, the Bible and the Gospels are nothing but a dead letter, nothing but words. Therefore, the great St. Augustine boldly said, to the heretics of the fourth century, who opposed to him texts of Scripture ill-understood: "I would not believe in the Gospels without the authority of the Catholic Church." *

** "Evangelio non crederem, nisi me cogeret Ecclesiæ Catholicæ auctoritas!"*

TWENTY-SECOND OBJECTION.

AN HONEST MAN OUGHT NOT TO CHANGE HIS RELIGION. WE OUGHT TO REMAIN IN THE RELIGION IN WHICH WE WERE BORN.

ANSWER. Yes, when we are born in the true religion, which is the Catholic religion.

But when we have not had the happiness of being born a Catholic, and we come to discover the true faith, not only is it *permitted,* but *absolutely necessary,* under pain of committing otherwise a great sin, to quit the Protestant sect (or other), in which we were brought up.

This is not *apostasy.* An *apostate* is one who abandons truth for error.

To abandon error to return to truth, is to accomplish the will of God; is to perform an act supremely reasonable, legitimate, loyal; is to act according to one's conscience, to fulfil the most sacred of duties.

It is, besides, to perform an *act of heroic virtue.* For the person who thus becomes converted has nearly always to brave a terrible storm, reproaches, contempt, insult, tears, the supplications of his family, of friends, of all the members of the religion he is about to renounce, and of its ministers above all, wounded by this desertion.

Then should he call to mind those great words of the Saviour: "I AM NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT THE SWORD! *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the*

daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her *mother-in-law. . . . And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*

"*He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me,* IS NOT WORTHY OF ME.

"*And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me.*

"AND YOU SHALL BE HATED BY ALL MEN FOR MY NAME'S SAKE; BUT HE THAT SHALL PERSEVERE UNTO THE END, HE SHALL BE SAVED."

A celebrated Protestant, Madame de Stael, in a religious discussion, which she had herself provoked on the subject of a change of religion, had recourse to this very trite defence: "*I wish to live and die in the religion of my fathers.*" "*And I, Madam, in the religion of my grandfathers,*" replied her witty adversary. Because, as you know, previous to the sixteenth century, all Christians were Catholics.

All have heard the sensible reason which decided Henry IV., a Protestant, to become a Catholic. He was present at a conference between certain Catholic doctors and Protestant ministers. "Can I be saved in the Catholic Church?" he demanded of the Protestant ministers when the discussion was brought to a close. "Yes, Sire," they answered, "but you will be saved more easily by remaining in the reformed religion."

"And you, gentlemen," said the king to the Catholic doctors, "what is your opinion?" "We think, Sire, and we positively declare to you, that

having once known which is the true Church, you are absolutely obliged to enter it, and that salvation is no longer possible for your soul in Protestantism."

"I go, then, for the most sure side," concluded the king, as he rose from his seat; "since all the world agrees that I can be saved as a Catholic, I shall become a Catholic."

And he abjured his errors.

TWENTY-THIRD OBJECTION.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS HAD ITS DAY.

ANSWER. Behold nearly two thousand years that she has existed, and nearly as long a time that the same thing has been said of her.

Every age, every impious wretch, every inventor of a sect or heresy, thinks he is at last arrived at that famous day when the Catholic Church is to be buried never to rise again; each of them thinks he is destined to intone the "*De Profundis*" of the papacy, of the Catholic priesthood, of the mass, and of all the ancient articles of the Church's faith . . . and, nevertheless, THE DAY COMES NOT.

Thus, in the first century of Christianity, one of the proconsuls of the Emperor Trajan wrote to him, "Before long, thanks to persecution, *this sect* will be crushed, and we shall hear no more of this God crucified."

And Trajan is dead, and that God crucified reigns ever in the world!

In the same manner, three centuries later, Julian, the apostate, boasted of "preparing the grave of the Galilean," that is, of annihilating His religion and His Church . . .

And Julian is dead, and the Galilean and His Church live still!

So, in the sixteenth century, Luther, that revolutionary monk, who made a religion out of pride and revolt, spoke of the papacy as of a superannuated institution about to perish for ever: "Oh, Pope!" said he, "I was thy torment during my lifetime; after my death I shall prove thy destruction!" . . .

And Luther is dead, and his Protestantism is melting away on all sides! And the papacy remains more living, more flourishing, more venerated than ever!

In like manner, Voltaire, the enemy of Jesus Christ, who signed his letters, *"Voltaire, the Christ-mocker,"* or, *"Let us crush the wretch"* (that is to say, Jesus Christ and His Church), wrote to one of his friends, "I am weary of hearing that twelve men were sufficient to found the Catholic religion; I want to show the world that one man was sufficient to destroy it." "Twenty years hence," he wrote to another, "the Galilean will *have a fine game!*"*

And *twenty years later, to the very day,* Vol-

* Good cards, as we say in English: said ironically, meaning a desperate—a losing game: the expression being as profane as the thought was blasphemous and God-defying.

taire died in a paroxysm of despair, calling for a priest, whom his friends, the philosophers, would not suffer to approach him.

And the Catholic Church lives still, traversing the ages, crushing in her peaceful passage all those who wish to crush her.

The same fate will attend our grand modern systems, philosophical and social, which modestly assume to be reformations of the religion of Jesus Christ, substitutes for the Catholic Church.

Less formidable than their predecessors, these poor people never suspect their weakness! They imagine they are producing something new, while they only *hash up* the old theme of the Voltaires, the Calvins, the Luthers, the Ariuses, etc., etc.

Have they forgotten the Saviour's words to the first Pope and to the first bishops: "*Go, teach all nations, I will be with you all days,* EVEN TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD."

Have they forgotten what He said to the chief of the apostles: "*Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my Church,* AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT?"

What God has founded, can they hope to be able to destroy?

No, the Catholic Church has not "had her day;" her day will never come to an end, until the world shall have come to an end.

The Church fears nothing; she knows what is the divine principle of her strength, of her life. And she will consign her present adver-

saries to the tomb, more surely and speedily than she has done any of their predecessors.

TWENTY-FOURTH OBJECTION.

FOR MY PART, I WANT THE PURE GOSPEL—PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

ANSWER. And I, too, I wish that, and no other; and I possess it, if I am a good Catholic; and you, too, may possess it on the same conditions.

If you are a good Catholic, you practice the Gospel maxims in all their purity; you have the same Christianity, the same articles of belief, the same religion as the early Christians.

Time has only modified Christianity in some of its external forms; the substance is the same, absolutely the same from the time of its birth.

These modifications, or developments, which cause unreflecting people to believe that present Christianity is different from primitive Christianity, are a part of the very nature of things, and are visible in all the works of God.

For instance, is *man* a different being from himself at the ages of one year, ten years, thirty years? No; evidently it is *the same* individual, developing gradually, and acquiring the perfection of his being.

So it is with the works of God in the supernatural order.

The Catholic Church, in the time of the apostles, was in its germ; all her resources, her power, and vitality were not yet thoroughly manifested; but they existed, ready to be developed in ages to come.

The more we study Christian antiquity, the more do we recognize the truth of the above assertion. And it is this conscientious study which has been the means of bringing back to the Catholic religion a vast number of learned men, either Protestants or unbelievers, who found in the monuments of the first three centuries of the Church the striking vestiges, and the very principle of all our Catholic institutions; among others, the spiritual supremacy of the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter; his doctrinal authority, as well as that of the bishops, the apostles' successors; the pomp of divine worship; the sacrifice of the Mass, with all the ceremonies that we observe this day, and of which the greater part may be traced to the actual time of the apostles; the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God; the invocation of the saints, veneration shown to their relics and images; the seven sacraments, among them, auricular confession, etc., etc., etc.

In the catacombs of Rome, particularly in that of St. Agnes, *which dates from the middle of the second century,* there have been recently discovered whole chapels containing several altars in which the relics of martyrs reposed, with paintings, images of the Blessed Virgin, a pontifical chair, vessels for holy water, confessionals, etc.

The credulity of the world is then greatly imposed on, when it is asserted that true Christianity, that of the early ages, is to be found anywhere but in the belief, and practice of, the Catholic religion.

In all times, *Christian* and *Catholic* were synonymous words, and good Catholics of the present day only differ from those of the first centuries by their exterior costume; in faith, in heart, in the good works they perform, they are the same.

All heresies have had the same pretensions as the would-be reformers of society and religion in our days. They repeat what *their ancestors,* Luther and Calvin, said three and a half centuries ago: "We come to *reform* Christianity by bringing it back to its primitive purity. You, the Catholic Church, and you Catholic priests understand nothing of all this; you have corrupted the truth, the religion, the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We alone possess these things, and bring them before the world! Let all listen to us; then human miseries will be at an end; a new era is about to begin!!" . . .

Let us let them talk, and not believe the first word of what they say.

TWENTY-FIFTH OBJECTION.

HAVE MY OWN RELIGION. EVERY ONE IS FREE TO PRACTICE HIS RELIGION AS HE UNDERSTANDS IT; IT IS A MATTER THAT CONCERNS ME ONLY, AND I SERVE GOD IN MY OWN WAY.

ANSWER. And *your way*, is not to serve God at all, perhaps! That is like persons who mean by "liberty of conscience," "liberty not to have a conscience."

However, every one is not free to serve God after his own fashion, he is OBLIGED to serve God as God WILLS to be served, and not otherwise.

It "concerns you," undoubtedly, but it concerns some one else besides: and that is the Church, whom God has *commanded* to teach you how to serve Him. "Go," said He to the first bishops of His Church, "*go and* TEACH ALL NATIONS; TEACH THEM TO OBSERVE ALL MY COMMANDMENTS. *He who hears you, hears me,* and he that despises you despises me; *and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*

The Christian religion (or the Catholic, it is the same thing) is the *only true* religion; we have already seen this;* it is, then, the only real and legitimate service of God.

Every man, therefore,

1. Who does not believe all the Christian

* See chapters xviii., xix., and xx.

truths which the Church teaches, which she has summed up in the Apostles' Creed, and explains in the Catholic catechisms;

2. Who does not fulfill to the best of his ability the ten commandments of God, and the precepts which the pastors of the Church inculcate;

3. Who does not practice the Christian virtues (chastity, humility, meekness, obedience, detachment from worldly things), etc., and shuns the contrary vices;

4. And who does not employ the means of salvation which the Church holds out to her children, that is to say, prayer and the sacraments;

Every man, I repeat, who does not serve God thus, *does not serve Him really*. He offers to God a species of worship which God does not desire; he desires to arrive by a different road from the one he was directed to follow; he has the appearance of religion, but not its reality.

Therefore, you are not free to serve God after your own fashion; above all, you are not at liberty to abstain from serving Him at all.

TWENTY-SIXTH OBJECTION.

PRIESTS ARE MEN LIKE OTHERS; THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS ARE MEN; HOW CAN MEN BE INFALLIBLE? I AM WILLING TO OBEY GOD; BUT NOT MEN LIKE MYSELF.

ANSWER. That is as if a soldier were to say,

"I am willing to obey the king; but I will not obey my general, nor my colonel, nor captain: for they are the king's *subjects* as much as I am."

Would you have much difficulty in answering him?

Nor have I any in answering you.

The Church, it is true, is composed of *men;* the Pope, the bishops, and priests are men.

But they are men whom JESUS CHRIST Himself has clothed with spiritual power and divine authority.

And on this account, *they are not men like others.*

The apostles, who were the first bishops of the Church, were sent to men by Our Lord Jesus Christ, to be like another *Himself.* To obey them, was not to obey men, but God, and Jesus Christ. To disobey them, and despise their teaching, was to disobey God, to despise Jesus Christ. "Whosoever despiseth you, despiseth me."

It is not to the man that I submit myself, it is to God, who exercises His authority over me through him.

The sole difference then between the commandments of God and the commandments of the Church, is that the first are directly addressed to us by God, the latter indirectly by His envoys; but it is always God who commands.

Neither is it, properly speaking, *the man* who is infallible in the Pope, it is Jesus Christ, it is God who clothes him with His truth, so that

he may not be able to teach error to Christian nations. *

Therefore, in a matter of religious obedience we must not take heed to the personal qualities of the Pope, the bishop, or the priest, who administers holy things to us, but only to his legitimate authority, to his character of pope, of bishop, or of priest.

This is why the defects, sometimes even the vices of priests (which, thank God, are rare) should not diminish in our minds the respect, faith, and love due to religion.

These weaknesses are attributable to the *man* and not to the *priest*. They cannot attack the divine, sacerdotal character with which he is invested. Did the crime of Judas stain his ministry?

It is also the reason why the Mass, or the absolution, of a bad priest, are as *valid* as the Mass, the absolution, of a faithful priest. The consecration takes place by the words of one as much as the other; sins are remitted by both equally, because these actions belong to the *priest*, not to the *man*, and the sins of a priest do not take from him the indelible character of the priesthood.

* It is right to add here, that the Church is infallible only in matters of religion, such as the defining of articles of faith, rules of morality, general discipline, the liturgy, canonization of saints, etc. Our Lord Jesus Christ aids the Church in all these things, and always preserves her from enacting any thing contrary to truth or the spiritual welfare of the Christian World.

In these things *alone* is the Church infallible.

The bad priest is highly culpable; but his sacerdotal character remains always the same; it is, indeed, that of Jesus Christ, which nothing can ever alter or destroy.

TWENTY-SEVENTH OBJECTION.

OUT OF THE PALE OF THE CHURCH THERE IS NO SALVATION! WHAT INTOLERANCE! I CANNOT ADMIT ANY THING SO CRUEL.

ANSWER. See what it is that you cannot admit *in the sense* in which you understand it, namely, Whoever is not a Catholic is damned.

And see, too, how people criticise religion because they do not understand it, and how they make it utter things which are quite contrary to its spirit.

This saying, indeed, understood as the Church teaches, is the most simple of truths, and the most rational. "Out of the pale of the Church there is no salvation;" in other words, out of light there is darkness; out of good there is evil; out of truth there is error; out of life there is death, etc.

Where is, then, the mystery of all this? Where is the difficulty?

"Out of the pale of the Church there is no salvation," simply means, "that we are obliged, under pain of incurring mortal sin, to believe and practice the true religion (which is the Catholic religion), *when once it is in our power*

to do so." That means, that we sin, and consequently lose our souls, if we voluntarily reject truth, when it is shown to us. Is there anything very extraordinary in this? Any thing to justify the epithets, intolerant, cruel?

A Protestant, or a schismatic person, is not *damned* simply because he is a Protestant, or because he is schismatic. If he is *in good faith* in his error, that is, if he has never had the opportunity, from one reason or another, of knowing and embracing the Catholic faith, he is considered by the Church as being one of her children; and if he has lived according to what he has believed to be the true law of God, if he has kept the commandments, he will have the same claim to the joys of heaven as if he were a Catholic.

In other words, the Catholic Church teaches that, whilst no one will be saved *on account of* Protestantism, it is quite possible for one to be saved *in spite of* Protestantism.

There are, thank God, a great number of Protestants who have this good faith, and even among their ministers such are to be found. M. de Cheverus, the Bishop of Boston, converted two of these, most learned and pious men; and after their return to the Catholic Church, they declared to the good bishop, that until the moment of their acquaintance with him, they had never entertained any doubts as to the truth of their religion.

Let us not, however, disturb our minds with such questions as the judgment of God on Protestants and infidels. On the one hand, we

know that God is good, and He desires the salvation of all, and on the other hand, that He is justice itself. Let us serve Him in the best way we can, and not disquiet ourselves about others.

People usually confound two essentially distinct things; *intolerance as regards doctrine,* and *intolerance as regards persons;* and after having confused things together, they affect great indignation, and cry out against the harshness and barbarity of the Church!

If the Church were to teach what people pretend that she teaches, she would, indeed, be harsh and cruel, and it would be no easy matter to cause people to believe in her.

But the case is widely different. The Church is not intolerant, except in a just, true, *necessary* degree. Full of mercy for individuals, *she is only intolerant to doctrines.* She imitates God, who detests sin in us, and yet shows mercy to sinners.

Doctrinal intolerance is the essential character of the true religion. The TRUTH, indeed, which it is commissioned to teach, is absolute, is immutable. All must conform to it, it must bend to none. Whoever does not possess it, is deceived. There is no compromise possible with it; you must have it entirely or not at all. Away from it there is nothing but error.

The Catholic Church alone has always preserved this inflexibility in her teaching. It is, perhaps, the most striking proof of her truth, and of the divine mission of her Pastors.

Indulgent toward *weakness, she* has never

been and never will be indulgent toward *error*. "If any one does not believe what I teach," she says in the rules of faith drawn up by her councils, "*let him be anathematized!*" that is to say, cut off from the Christian community.

Truth alone speaks with this authority.

Those who accuse the Church of cruelty, with regard to the intolerance they lay to her charge, have, perhaps, never read in Rousseau's "Social Contract" (he was the great apostle of *tolerance*), this astonishing maxim: "The sovereign may *banish from his states* all who do not believe the articles of faith of the religion of the country. If any one, after having publicly acknowledged these same dogmas, *conducts himself as if he did not believe them*, LET HIM BE PUNISHED WITH DEATH!" (Book iv. c. 8.) What tolerance!!!

It must be confessed that the Church understands it better than those who accuse her of being wanting in it.

TWENTY-EIGHTH OBJECTION.

BUT WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY ABOUT THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW?

ANSWER. Is it the massacre of St. Bartholomew, then, which prevents your living as you ought?

Are you afraid, that if you become a good

Christian, you will be called on to massacre your neighbors if they do not serve God!

The massacre of St. Bartholomew was one of those deplorable excesses which the irritation of civil wars, the craft of politics, the frenzy of some fanatics, and the brutal manners of those times can alone explain.

Religion is very far, indeed, from approving all that is done in her name, and covered with her sacred mantle.

It is certain that her enemies have singularly distorted this terrible fact. They have represented it as *the work of religion*, while it was really only the work of fanaticism and hatred, which religion condemns.

They have represented it as the work of the priesthood, while in reality not a SINGLE priest took any part in it. There were even several, among others the Bishop of Lisieux, who saved as many of the Huguenots as they could, and interceded for them to the king Charles IX., etc.

If there is any one fact now established beyond all dispute, it is this, that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was a *political coup d'etat*, that religion was rather the pretext than the cause of it, and that the artful Catharine de Medicis, the mother of Charles IX., sought much more to get rid of a political party who was every day harassing and disquieting her government more and more, than to promote the glory of God.

It has pleased a poet of the Voltaire school to represent the Cardinal of Lorraine "blessing

the poignards of the Catholics." Unfortunately the Cardinal of Lorraine was away in Rome at that very time, to be present at the election of the Pope Gregory XIII., the successor of Saint Pius V., who was just deceased.

But these gentlemen do not look so closely. "Lie, lie always," Voltaire ventured to write to his friends, "*something will always stick.*" *

For the last three centuries the hatred of Protestants, and, at a later period, of the Voltairians, against the Church, has so adulterated history that it is very difficult to discover the truth.

Facts are arranged, added to, suppressed, highly colored, according to the prejudices of the writers. Crimes are imputed to the Church which she holds in utter abhorrence. The most odious accusations are cast upon religion. As a general rule, distrust the recital of historical facts, in which religion is made to play a ridiculous, or barbarous, or ignoble part. It is possible that they may be true; and in such a case, we must throw the whole blame on the weak or vicious nature of the man who has forgotten what he owed to his character of priest, bishop, or even of pope, perhaps, and who has done evil when it was his duty to do good; but it is also possible (and this is more frequently the case), that these facts are, if not pure invention, at least so much perverted and exaggerated, that one can, with justice, tax them with falsehood.

Nothing is easier than to attack the Church

* Letter to the Marquis of Argens.

in this manner; but is it a legitimate mode of attack? Is it fair? Is it honest?

TWENTY-NINTH OBJECTION.

THERE IS NO SUCH PLACE AS HELL; NO ONE HAS EVER RETURNED THENCE TO PROVE IT.

ANSWER. Certainly, no one has ever returned thence; and if you go there yourself, you will not return any more than others.

If any one person had ever returned thence, I would say to you, "Go there, and you will see if there is such a place." But it is precisely because we cannot make this experiment, that it is such *madness* to expose ourselves to an evil irremediable, interminable, and unbounded.

You say there is no hell? Are you sure of it? I defy you to affirm it sincerely. You would have a conviction none has ever had before you, not even the most impious of men. Rousseau's reply to the question, "Is there a hell?" was, *"I cannot tell."* And Voltaire wrote to one of his friends, who thought he had discovered proofs of the non-existence of hell, *"You are very fortunate. I am far from having arrived at that.*

But I will show you what a terrible affirmation I can oppose to your *perhaps.* JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, made man, declared that there is a hell, and one so dreadful, that

"the fire thereof shall never be quenched." These are His own words, repeated many times over. *

And which should I believe by preference? One who has never studied religion, who attacks what he knows nothing of, who can possess no certainty, nothing but *doubts* on this subject; or Him who has said, "I am THE TRUTH; heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away?"

Be not so rash: it is Jesus, the good Jesus; Jesus, so merciful and compassionate, who pardons *all* to poor repentant sinners; who receives without a word of reproach the guilty Magdalen, and the woman taken in adultery, the publican Zacchæus, and the crucified malefactor; it is JESUS, I say, who declares to you that there is an *everlasting hell fire*, and who

* We see in the Gospel that our Lord spoke on *fifteen different occasions of the fire of hell.*

See, among others, the seven or eight last verses of the ninth chapter of St. Mark, where it is said, it is better to lose all and suffer all than to be cast into the hell of fire, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. Also, "for every one shall be *salted* with fire," that is, at once impregnated with it, consumed, and seasoned by it, as salt preserves flesh by becoming impregnated with it. See also in St. Matthew, at the end of the twenty-fifth chapter, "Depart from me, you cursed, into *everlasting fire*, which was prepared for the devil and his angels . . . and these shall go into *everlasting punishment*, but the just into *life everlasting*."

And in the fifteenth chapter of St. John, "If any one abide not in me," by grace, "they shall cast him into the fire, and he burneth."

repeats it on fifteen separate occasions in His Gospel!

Would you pretend to understand mercy and goodness better than Jesus Christ?

In this matter, you see, more than in any other, it is frequently the wicked man's *heart* which suggests these ideas, and not his reason. It is the cry of wicked passions, fearing the justice of God, and anxious to stifle the voice of conscience, "There is no divine justice; there is no hell!"

Yet, what matter these cries, these evil passions in reality? Does the blind man who denies the light prevent the light from shining? Whether the blasphemer denies or acknowledges the fact, there exists a hell, where wickedness is punished, and that hell is eternal.

It is the conviction of humanity at large. The certainty of hell is so thoroughly implanted in the depths of the human conscience, that one meets with this dogma among all nations, ancient and modern, among idolatrous savages, as among civilized Christians. It is so completely a fundamental part of Christianity, that, of all the heresies which have attacked Catholic dogmas, not one has thought of denying it. The truth of hell has alone remained standing, intact, amidst so many ruins. *

* However, among Protestants there has arisen a sect, the Universalists, numbering some hundred thousands of adherents in the United States, who deny the eternity or even the existence of future punishments. The denial of it is also a tenet of the Rappists.

The greatest philosophers, and men of genius, not only among Christians, for that is a matter of course, but among pagans, have admitted its existence: Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Plato, Socrates, lastly, the impious Celsus himself, that Voltaire of the third century. Who would presume to be more difficult to persuade than these?

The doctrine of eternal punishment has, besides, a complete compensation, according to the Church's teaching, in the doctrine of eternal reward. The one manifests the sovereign and *infinite justice* of God; the other his sovereign and *infinite goodness*. But are not all the attributes of God worthy of adoration, His justice among them? I repeat again, few would think of denying it, if they did not stand in just dread of it.

I might add, in this place, many reflections on the use, and even necessity of the dogma of the eternity of future punishments. I might remark that it is this *eternal duration* which renders it thus useful and necessary; as it is the eternal duration and that only which alarms the wicked man, and has power to arrest the course of his crimes. Man feels that he will never come to an end; thence ensues the necessity for him of hopes and fears of a like immortal stature; all that is below it disappears from his sight.

If all the crimes which the fear of an *eternal* hell has arrested could be known, men would be struck with the necessity of this sanction; and as God gives to man all that is *necessary*

for him, from the necessity of eternal punishment, one would conclude its reality.

I might further show that there is no repentance possible in hell, and consequently there is no pardon possible; that hell appears incomprehensible to us only because we do not form an adequate idea of the enormity of sin, of which it is the chastisement, and of the easy means afforded us of avoiding it, etc. But I desire only to abide by the two great authorities I have already furnished you with touching your doubts: the authority of JESUS CHRIST and that of the HUMAN RACE.

Let us have a lively faith in the mysteries of Christianity. Let us live in accordance with our faith; let us love God and serve Him; let us imitate Jesus Christ; let us be good Christians, and we shall no longer have any thing to do with hell.

THIRTIETH OBJECTION.

GOD IS TOO GOOD TO DAMN ME.

ANSWER. Accordingly, it is not God who damns you, *it is you who damn yourself.*

God is no more the cause of hell than of sin, which has given birth to hell.

Why, then, does He *permit* sin?

Because, having endowed you with the most sublime of all His gifts, that of *intelligence,* which renders you like to Himself; and prepared *eternal* happiness for you, it was not fit-

ting that He should treat you like the animal creation, who have not that intelligence, and are only made for this world.

It was not fitting that you should be *forced* to receive God's gifts; it was needful that you should employ your intelligence to accept freely, and acquire for yourself the treasures of eternal bliss.

This is why God has given to us, together with intelligence, *moral liberty*, that is to say, the faculty of choosing with our free-will between good and evil, of following or shunning the voice of our merciful Father which calls us to Him.

This liberty is the highest mark of honor and love that we could receive from God.

If we abuse it, the fault is ours, not His.

If I were to give you a weapon to preserve your life if in any danger, would it not be a proof of my affection for you? And if, against my will, and despite all the warnings and instructions I gave you, so that you might make a good use of it, you were to turn this weapon against yourself, should I be the cause of your wound? Would it not be to you alone that the blame should be imputed?

This is what God does for us. He gives us the liberty to do good or evil; but he neglects no means to induce us to choose good. Instructions, warnings, kind and earnest invitations, terrible threats, He spares none. He loads us with His grace, He surrounds us with His assistance; but He does not *force us*: that would be to destroy His own work, the gift of free will.

He respects in us the gifts which He has bestowed on us.

"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose, therefore, life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. xxx. 19.)

It is, then, the reprobate who runs to his own perdition; it is not God who damns him, it is he *who damns himself*. God gives to each one that which he has freely chosen, life or death; Paradise, the fruit of virtue; or hell, the fruit of sin.

Two roads lie open before us in this life, the road of virtue and that of vice. The latter is sometimes smoother and more attractive than the former, particularly for the first part of the way; but it leads to hell, where sweetness is changed into bitterness; while the other leads to Paradise, where our labor is changed into an unspeakable rest.

To reach the gates of Paradise, we must choose the road that leads to Paradise; that is plain enough. The Catholic priest is the charitable guide sent from God, who shows us this road. How many, alas! close their ears to his voice! How many lose their way, and perish, from not following his directions!

THIRTY-FIRST OBJECTION.

GOD HAS FORESEEN FROM ALL ETERNITY WHETHER I SHALL BE SAVED OR LOST. I MAY DO WHAT I WILL; I CANNOT CHANGE MY DESTINY.

ANSWER. Suppose your wife were to say to you, "My dear, God has foreseen from all eter-

nity whether you will dine to-day or not. I may do what I will; it will happen as God has foreseen. I go, therefore, to take a promenade, and your dinner will prepare itself as it may."

Or if one of your children were to say, "My dear papa, God has foreseen from all eternity whether I shall work to-day or play the truant. Do what I will, I cannot change my destiny; so I will go and amuse myself, instead of going to school."

I think you would not be puzzled to reply to them, and especially to bring them to reason.

What you would reply to your wife and child, I will now reply to you.

The fore-knowledge of God does not destroy our liberty. And although our feeble reason cannot thoroughly solve this great mystery, it still knows enough about it to be certain of its truth.

1. First, we have all an inward conviction, in spite of all arguments, all sophistries, that we are free in all our resolutions.

I feel in writing these lines that it depends on my will, to place one word here instead of another, to continue or break off my work, etc. You who are reading, you feel, and nothing can convince you to the contrary, that it depends on yourself whether to read this book or close it, to sing or to be silent, to rise or remain seated, etc. You and I, then, are free agents.

2. In the second place, is it as difficult, really, as it appears, to reconcile our moral liberty with the fore-knowledge of God? I do not think it is, and I only see in it *a question of words.*

We measure God by our standard, we speak

of Him as of ourselves. We invest Him in our minds with our weaknesses; and thereby create for ourselves chimerical difficulties.

There is not, to say truth, any *prescience* in God. *Prescience* or *foresight* is to *see beforehand, to see what will one day happen.* To *foresee* is to suppose a future, not yet arrived. Now there is neither *future* nor succession of time with God, but an eternal and immutable *present.* The past and future exist only for finite beings subject to change. We, human creatures, foresee; but that is just one of the imperfections of our being. God, the perfect being, SEES, He does not foresee.

He *sees* us act. Now I never heard of any one saying, that the actual knowledge that God possesses of our actions was in any way a restraint on our liberty. Very well, my friend, God has no other but that.

This appears to me very simple, very easy to comprehend. There now only remains the mystery of God's eternity and immutability, or rather, the mystery of His existence. But who would ever be mad enough to say, I refuse to believe in God, because I cannot comprehend the INFINITE? Use, then, your liberty, under the eye of a merciful God, who will render to every man according to his works.

THIRTY-SECOND OBJECTION.

IT IS NOT WHAT GOES INTO THE MOUTH THAT DEFILES THE SOUL. GOD WILL NEVER DAMN ME FOR A MORSEL OF MEAT. MEAT IS NO WORSE ON FRIDAYS THAN ON OTHER DAYS.

ANSWER. You are quite right: it is not the meat which would condemn you; meat is as harmless one day as another. What does condemn you is disobedience, which is the cause of your eating meat on those days.

The wrong done on Friday is the violation of a law which does not exist for other days; it is the revolt against the legitimate authority of those pastors whom we ought to obey as representing HIM who sends them: "Go, I send you forth. He who heareth you heareth Me; he who despiseth you despiseth Me."

It is not, then, a question of any particular food or day, or of the palate; but of the sin incurred by refusing to obey a law at once obligatory and easy to keep.

Besides the great and general motive for observing all the laws of the Church, we may further urge that these laws are not made at random, or through caprice; they are based on solid and important reasons.

Thus the law of abstinence, the application of which occurs every week, is designed to recall incessantly to the Christian's recollection the Passion, sufferings, and death of the Saviour, as well

as the necessity of doing penance; it is the *public* practice of penance among Christians, etc.

None but the ignorant and superficial can regard this institution as useless. It is incredible how efficacious in practice is this simple observance of abstinence on Fridays in retaining the soul within the sacred influence of religious ideas.

The laws of the Church, although binding on pain of sin, are far from being harsh or tyrannical. The Church is a Mother, not an imperious mistress. It is quite sufficient that *serious and legitimate reasons* prevent your observing abstinence, to insure its dispensation in your case. The Church desires to do you good, not to do you harm. She desires to make you expiate your sins, not to make you ill. Illness, weakness of constitution, the fatigues of constant hard labor, extreme poverty, great difficulty in procuring abstinence fare; such are the reasons which dispense with this law.

To avoid any mistake, however, it is better to consult beforehand your parish priest or confessor, who are the proper interpreters of the law.

This observation, which extends to all the laws of the Church, shows how wise and moderate is the authority which enacts them. Let us, then, respect this authority from the bottom of our hearts; let us leave those to laugh who know nothing about it, while we fulfil, without murmuring, commandments so simple, so judicious, and so profitable for our souls.

THIRTY-THIRD OBJECTION.

GOD HAS NO NEED OF MY PRAYERS. HE KNOWS MY WANTS WITHOUT MY TELLING THEM TO HIM.

ANSWER. Undoubtedly he knows them; but you would be very wrong if you were to conclude from that that you could dispense with prayer.

God has no need of your prayers, it is true. Your prayers and homage in no way change His eternal beatitude. But He *exacts* from you this homage, this adoration, these thanksgivings, these prayers; because you, His creature and His child, owe Him these things.

To your thought, of which He is the author, He has a right; He desires that you should direct that thought to Him; and that heart which He has also given you, He has a right to its love, and He desires that, by love, you freely bestow it upon Him.

God knows all your wants. That is also perfectly true. It is not to make them known to Him, that you must acknowledge them to Him. It is that you may not lose sight of your utter helplessness without His succor; it is that you may ever keep in mind your dependence on Him.

It is *for your sake* that He has commanded you to pray, not for Himself. He *wills* that you should pray, first, because it is right and just that you should adore your God, that you should think of that Being who ever thinks of you, that you should love Him who is the Supreme Good

and your great benefactor; and finally, because it is good, profitable, and absolutely needful for you to pray.

What can be more sublime, what more simple, more easy, than prayer!

It is the noblest occupation of man in this world; it is that which ennobles, exalts, and renders worthy of a reasonable being, all our other occupations.

It is human thought applied to its most worthy object, to God.

It is the heart uniting itself to a God of infinite goodness, of infinite perfection, of infinite love, who can alone fully satisfy it.

It is the child speaking to his beloved father.

It is the friend holding familiar converse with his friend.

It is the pardoned criminal tenderly thanking his Saviour, the weak and infirm sinner praying for mercy to that God who has said, "I will never reject him that cometh to me."

Prayer is our consolation in all our troubles. It is that treasure of inward happiness, which nothing can take away from us. For prayer is in us; it is ourselves, I may say: because it is ourselves thinking of God and loving God.

It is the same with prayer as with the love of God. It is a thing so sweet and consoling, that God, in imposing this obligation on us, has only commanded us to be happy.

Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to render us happy by rendering us good, recommends to us nothing so much as prayer: "Pray without ceasing," said he, "and

do not weary." That is, accustom your soul to think of God, and to love Him above all things. Prayer is the very foundation of the Christian life.

Pray, and with earnestness; not merely with your lips, but from the bottom of your heart. Be faithful in rendering to God your filial homage at the beginning and at the close of the day.* Pray in your troubles; pray in your dangers; pray in your temptations. Pray after your faults and falls, to obtain their pardon. Pray in all the principal circumstances of your life.

Mingle your daily actions with prayer. Thus accompanied, nothing is insignificant before God; nothing is lost for Paradise. You will be pure and good, if you have constant recourse to prayer. Your heart will be at peace. In the midst of the sorrows of this life, you will have that internal joy which alleviates their bitterness; and when the time of your probation is at an end, you will reap a hundredfold the fruit of your faithfulness.

THIRTY-FOURTH OBJECTION.

I PRAY, AND DO NOT OBTAIN WHAT I ASK FOR. ONLY LOSE MY TIME.

ANSWER. Did St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, lose her time, when, during *sixteen*

* "Expect nothing," said St. Vincent de Paul one day, "of a man who does not say his prayers morning and evening."

years of prayers and tears, she sought of God what she at last obtained—the conversion of her son?

Did St. Francis de Sales lose his time when he labored during *twenty-two* years to attain meekness of heart?

Perseverance is one of the chief qualities of prayer.

Let us never weary of praying! God often seems to be deaf that we may cry to Him more loudly and more frequently. He seems to hide from us in order that we may feel His absence more sensibly, and appreciate better the sweetness of His presence.

Let us recall the promise of our Divine Master. "*Seek,* AND YOU SHALL FIND." We shall find, we are assured that we shall find. But we are not assured that we shall find *immediately.* St. Monica, that woman full of faith and perseverance, found her desire only after the lapse of sixteen years, and it is her unshaken constancy which sanctified her. The Canaanite woman in the Gospel obtained her child's life after asking *three* times, and this delay, so painful to the heart of a mother, was the trial and the triumph of her faith . . .

Let us, then, never be weary. In the very hour, perhaps, when our courage forsook us, God was at hand to help us!

The very moment in which we lost courage was, perhaps, when God was just about to come to our aid.

THIRTY-FIFTH OBJECTION.

WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE TO OFFEND GOD THAT HE SHOULD SEND ME SO MUCH TROUBLE?

ANSWER. "Man of little faith," who understandest not the secrets of God! When He visits you with suffering, never, I beseech you, propose to Him that dreadful question, "What have I done to offend you, that I should thus suffer?"

It is *very seldom* that He could not reply to you, by spreading out before your terrified eyes, a long and frightful list of sins, which your religious indifference veils from your observation, and the eternal pains of hell which these sins have merited a hundred times over!

He might always reply to you by recalling to your recollection the terrible flames of purgatory, by reminding you that none are holy in His sight, and that the mitigated pains of this present life are very trivial in comparison with the expiation that is to come.

He might *always* reply by showing to you the Paradise where He now dwells, the manger at Bethlehem, the cross; and by telling you that your journey through this world is but a passing condition of trial; that He has given to you the example of patience, so that by the holy use of suffering, you may sanctify your soul, and accumulate on your head a great amount of glory in eternity.

He might recall to you those oracles which fell formerly from His divine lips.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall weep and mourn, while the world rejoices. But your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in labor hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she has brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also, you now, indeed, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." . . .

Whatever you may be, a just man or a sinner, endeavor to appreciate the adorable mystery of suffering! To suffer is to receive a familiar visit from God! Suffering is the most precious gift of His mercy.

It is the crowning mark of His love.

God had no more excellent gift to give to His only Son, Jesus; to Mary, His Mother, the best beloved of all His creatures; to His saints, His martyrs, and to all His faithful.

If you suffer with Jesus Christ, you will be crowned with Him. It is by means of the CROSS that we attain to GLORY.

THIRTY-SIXTH OBJECTION.

WHAT IS THE USE OF PRAYING TO THE VIRGIN MARY? IT IS GREAT SUPERSTITION. BESIDES, HOW CAN SHE HEAR US?

ANSWER. Tell me, how can *you* hear me?

I hear you with my ears.

I know that; it is not exactly what I ask you.

I ask you *how* you can hear me with you ears?

I move my lips; they slightly stir the air; an this air penetrates into your ear, and there arrested by a little bone covered with skin, an called the *tympanum* of the ear. And this is ho you hear what I say to you!

How is that brought about? What connec tion is there between the breath of air on the tym panum, and my *thoughts* which become man fested to your mind? If we did not daily wi ness this fact, we should certainly never cred it. It is, nevertheless, very certain that such the case.

Well! when you have explained to me, how you, who are two paces distant from me, ca hear me, and enter into communication with m thoughts when I speak to you, I will explain t you how the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, wh are in heaven, can hear my prayers and answe them.

The same God who makes you hear me, make them hear me, when I ask them to intercede fo me to Him.

By what means does God effect this? It signi fies little to me. What I know is, that it is th case; that God does make known to the Blesse Virgin, whom He has raised, alone among al His creatures, to the wonderful dignity of HI MOTHER, to her whom He gave to us to be *Mother*, an *advocate*, and a *protectress*, when H

ied on the cross, that He does make known to he Blessed Virgin MARY, the prayers, and the vants of His people; that He always listens to he intercession of Her whom He loves above all he works of His hands; that He still comes mong us through Her, as He did on the day of His Incarnation, and that the surest way to reach ESUS, is to go to MARY, who presents us before Her Son and our God, thus covering by Her rotection our unworthiness and our imperfect ispositions.

What I also know is, that there is nothing more oothing, more cheering, more consoling, than to ove the Blessed Virgin, to confide to Her our roubles, and to offer Her our hearts.

And, furthermore, that devotion toward Her nakes us better, renders us chaste, pure, meek, umble, makes us love prayer, gives joy and eace of heart. . . .

What I know is, that in loving and serving Mary, I am only imitating, though very imperfectly, our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself.

He was the first who loved His mother; so good, so holy, beyond all creatures; He first ministered to Her, and rendered Her all sorts of honor, of duties, of obedience.

And as He said to me on the eve of His death, "I have given to you an example, *so that what I have done, you may also do,*" I endeavor to love and honor in the most perfect manner the Blessed Virgin MARY, whom He so perfectly loved and honored.

This is not the proper place for a treatise o devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

But it is, however, the place in which to s that hatred to this particular devotion has be the universal mark of all heresies, of all religio insurrections; that MARY is never despised a forsaken without our soon seeing JESUS fo saken; and even that we never see any one ne lect or lessen his devotion in order to becom better, or to become better in consequence.

It must be said that the poor Protestants a much to be pitied that they do not know and lo their MOTHER! . . . that they do not receive H whom JESUS CHRIST has chosen, has loved, ha united inseparably to the mystery of His incarna tion, to the mystery of His manger in Bethlehem to those of His infancy, of His hidden life, o His public life, to the mystery of His suffering and of our redemption; Her whom He associate in heaven with the adorable mysteries of Hi glory and His royalty.

They must surely tremble, when, casting thei eyes over the history of all Christian ages, the find none which does not condemn their silence and which has not realized the prophetic languag of the Blessed Virgin herself: "All generation shall call me blessed." (St. Luke, c. i.)

Nowhere do we perceive that solitary Chris dreamed of by Luther, Calvin, and their disc ples, but Christ as He appears in the eyes of th prophets, as He appears in the gospel historie the Son of the Virgin, formed of her flesh an blood, borne so long in her womb and in he arms, fulfilling toward her, for a period of thirt

years, the duties of the most obedient Son, expiring before her eyes, and again resting in her arms before being removed from the cross to the sepulchre. . . .

They seem to fear that they shall rob JESUS CHRIST of all the veneration that they pay to MARY. But does it not betray a great want of knowledge of the human heart, which is formed in the image of that of God, to fear to wound a friend, by showing, *for his sake,* a great affection for his mother? Is it not for the sake of the Son that we love the Mother? And is it not to JESUS CHRIST *that* all this homage returns?

Now, that there may be abuses of this principle, and some extravagances among the ignorant relative to this devotion to the Blessed Virgin, who denies? What is there, however holy, which has not been sometimes carried to excess? But these abuses are reproved by the Church. The bishops and clergy take suitable measures to remove such excesses among the faithful, as soon as ever they come to their knowledge.

In all that regards devotion to Mary, believe me, the most usual extreme is quite on the other side, she is *too little* venerated rather than *too much.* For any honor short of adoration (and she must not be adored; adoration is due to God alone) can hardly be too great for her. We shall never honor her in so eminent a degree as God honored her in making her His MOTHER. We shall never love her as much as JESUS, our model, loved her.

As Catholics we are the great family of JESUS

CHRIST. Is it, then, astonishing that we should love His Mother?

THIRTY-SEVENTH OBJECTION.

WHY ARE THERE NO MORE MIRACLES?

ANSWER. A *miracle* is a sensible fact, manifestly surpassing the powers of nature.

It is something which God only can do, and which shows His intervention in the things of this world in an extraordinary manner.

"Why are there no more miracles?" it is asked.

To this question I will furnish two answers:

1st. There are miracles yet, and a great many of them exist. 2d. It is very natural that there are fewer now than in the first ages of Christianity.

1st. *Miracles do still exist.*

I, who speak to you in this little book, could tell you that I have witnessed some, and that I have also seen many persons in whom *authentic miracles* have been operated, such, for instance, as the instantaneous recovery from incurable diseases.

But I prefer quoting an instance of more general application.

An English Protestant was at Rome during the pontificate of Pope Benedict XIV. He was talking with one of the cardinals, of the Catholic religion, attacking it with much energy, and,

above all, rejecting, as false, miracles worked by the intercession of the saints.

Not long after, this same cardinal was commissioned to examine certain papers relating to the beatification of a certain servant of God. He placed them in the Protestant's hands, advising him to examine them carefully, and to let him hear his opinion on the degree of faith which these testimonials merited.

After a few days had passed, the Englishman brings back the papers. "Well, sir," demands the Prelate of him, "what is your impression on the subject of these documents?"

"Upon my word, your Eminence, I must own that I have nothing to say; and if all the miracles of the saints canonized by your Church were as certain as these, it might give me cause for reflection." . . .

"Really?" said the cardinal to him, smiling; "well, we at Rome are more difficult to convince than you are, for these proofs have not seemed sufficiently convincing to us, and the cause is rejected."

The Englishman was so struck with this manner of acting, that he acquainted himself more thoroughly with the Catholic faith. He abjured Protestantism before quitting Rome.

Now, this extraordinary severity still exists in the process of the canonization of the saints. And as saints are canonized at the present day as in all past ages, * and on the other hand, none

* Pope Pius IX. canonized, in 1862, the martyrs of Japan, and, in 1867, St. Paul of the Cross and many other saints.

is canonized without a rigorous investigation, and without at least five separate miracles being proved to have occurred through his intercession we may fairly affirm that *miracles do still exist*.

2d. I reply: There are *fewer* miracles than at the rise of Christianity, and it is quite natural there should be.

For three reasons:

1. Because the real object of miracles has been attained; namely, the conversion of the world and the establishment of the Christian Religion.

2. Because this object being once attained, and having been attained only through the means of miracles, and very striking ones too, is an everlasting attestation of the fact of these miracles.

The evidence of the divinity of the Christian religion, manifested by *great prodigies,* was alone able to convince the sensual pagans and the stubborn Jews; 1st, of the divinity of Jesus Christ, poor and crucified; 2dly, of the truth of His doctrine, altogether opposed to their most deeply-rooted ideas; 3dly, of the divine mission of the apostles and their successors.

The world converted to Christianity without the means of miracles, would have been the most astounding, the most incomprehensible of miracles.

3dly. Because we have now before our eyes as striking a proof of the divinity of our faith as the miracles shown to the early Christians were; I speak of the prophecies of the Gospel, and their accomplishment in the world.

There are two divine and supernatural facts

which prove the divine origin of Christianity: 1, the miracles of Jesus Christ and His envoys; 2, the accomplishment of the Gospel prophecies.

The early Christians saw the miracles performed, *they did not* see the accomplishment of their Divine Master's prophecies; they were, nevertheless, obliged to believe them firmly; and they believed them without difficulty, because of the miracles which they witnessed.*

We of the present day do not see the miracles which our fathers saw, but we see the accomplishment of the Gospel prophecies; and what we *thus see* causes us easily to admit the miracles which we have not seen.

Evident miracles caused the early Christians to admit the certain future accomplishment of the prophecies: the evident accomplishment of the prophecies causes us to admit the certain reality of the by-gone miracles.

Miracles were the proofs of the early Christians; prophecy fulfilled, on the contrary, is our proof, by the evidence of the divine fact of its accomplishment.

And let us observe that this proof, derived from the accomplishment of the prophecies, is perhaps more peremptory than that derived from the miracles of past times, in this sense, that time daily augments its force.

Thus, the stability of St. Peter's See, the permanent dispersion and, at the same time, the preservation of the Jews, during nineteen cen-

* To believe, is to admit the truth of any thing on the testimony of others.

turies, etc., are facts much more striking and remarkable than if they had subsisted only during three or four centuries. And if the world endures yet some thousands of years, this proof of the divinity of religion will be much more irresistible in three or four thousand years than it is at the present day.

It is, therefore, not astonishing that there should be fewer miracles now than during the first ages of Christianity.

THIRTY-EIGHTH OBJECTION.

WHY IS LATIN THE LANGUAGE OF THE CHURCH? WHY USE AN UNKNOWN TONGUE?

ANSWER. Because, for unchangeable dogmas, is required an unchangeable language, which should guarantee from all alteration, even the formula of those dogmas.

Because, for a universal community is required a universal language, which should maintain, preserve, and proclaim aloud the unanimity of the faith, and the universal fraternity of the true Religion.

Protestants and all the enemies of the Catholic Church have always made the use of the Latin tongue a subject of bitter reproach to her. They are conscious that the immobility of this cuirass marvellously preserves from all alteration those ancient Christian traditions whose testimony crushes them. They desire to break the form,

in order to strike at that which it covered. Error willingly speaks a variable and changing language.

If this reproach is closely scrutinized, however, it will be found to have no foundation. Are there not innumerable persons who understand Latin? Are not all sermons and instructions, that is, all those parts of divine worship which are addressed directly to the faithful, conveyed in the vulgar tongue? Are not great numbers of the prayers and other services of the Church translated? What Christian is there who is prevented from following the office because of the mysterious language of the altar? Do not certain ceremonies, certain sounds, as that of the sanctuary-bell, acquaint all who are present with what is going on, and what the priest is saying? If they are distracted and inattentive, is it not their own fault?

Besides, nothing can equal the dignity, grandeur, clearness, and beauty of the Latin language. It is the language of the conquerors of the world, the Romans; it is the language of civilization; it is the language of science. This language is the queen of languages; it deserved to become the language of Religion.

Besides the great changes which alter fundamentally the living languages, there are many others which appear only slightly important, but are really very important, indeed. Thus everyday usage alters the sense of words, and often debases it by licentiousness. If the Church spoke our vernacular, it would be in the power of every

shameless wit to render the most sacred word of the Liturgy either ridiculous or indecent. *

Under every imaginable point of view, the language of religion should be taken out of the domain of human caprice and human mutability.

This is why the Catholic Church speaks Latin

THIRTY-NINTH OBJECTION.

PRIESTS ARE ALWAYS ASKING FOR MONEY.

ANSWER. Yes, but is it for themselves? They ask for it only for the support of the poor, and the expenses attending the celebration of divine worship. Do you blame them for this? Are they not the providers of the poor, and the fathers of the indigent? Are they not the ministers of God, charged with the honor of His worship and the care of His temples?

They have often to ask, it is true; but is not this partly your own fault? Why are you, who are so lavish in your pleasures, so parsimonious in giving for the good of others? Why do you give so little when they ask you for your con-

* It may be remarked that every one of these accidents has actually befallen the English liturgy of the Anglo-American Episcopalians. A number of words used in this rite have entirely lost the meaning in which they were first employed; a more subtle and dangerous change has taken place in the grammatical forms while many expressions have become overlaid with vulgar, ludicrous and profane associations.

tribution? Is it not your ill-timed economy which obliges them, in spite of themselves, to return to the charge?

Moreover, think you that it is possible to meet great expenses without great resources? Only put yourself in the place of your parish priest, having the care of all the poor of the place, obliged to keep up and found benevolent societies, obliged to keep the Church and all that belongs to it in good condition and repair, a more expensive item than you imagine. Is not money necessary for all this?

Do not be surprised, then, if you are asked for it. Such an outlay, be assured, will cause you no remorse. Neither will it ruin you. Almsgiving never yet ruined any one. If you have much, give much; if you have little, give a little; but the little you give, give cheerfully.

Priests are men of faith and charity. Let us have more faith and more charity, and we shall understand why they are always "begging."

FORTIETH OBJECTION.

CONFESSION IS AN INVENTION OF THE PRIESTS.

ANSWER. Are you sure of that? Here is a great question.

Pray where and when did any human genius succeed in imposing such a burden, and in getting so many millions to accept it?

You understand its bearing, my dear reader. If it is God who invented this thing, we must submit, for it is madness to resist God. If it is not God, but a man, such as you or I, we must (pardon the expression) send him about his business, himself and his invention, for it is about the most disagreeable invention we could possibly know of.

To confess is to own up to one's sins, that is to say, to tell a priest all the evil one has ever committed, however disgraceful it may be. I ask you, what can be more disagreeable? What greater sacrifice could be required of man's pride?

Must this sacrifice, then, be made? Am I bound in conscience, on pain of revolt against God, to confess?

Yes.

For the confession of sins, to be made to the Priest, was instituted by JESUS CHRIST Himself, the Son of the living God, who came down upon earth, and became Man for our salvation.

Let us open His Gospel.

We there find two sayings of this Divine Master, relating to the confession of sins, and the power given by Him to His ministers to remit sins to the contrite sinner in His name.

The first of these sayings is the *promise* made to His apostles by Jesus Christ, of giving them this power. The second is the accomplishment of this promise.

1. *The promise.* It is to be found in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chap. xviii.: "*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven,*

and WHATSOEVER YE SHALL LOOSE ON EARTH, SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN."

2. *The realization of the promise.* (St. John, xx. 20.) It is on Easter day, the very day of the Resurrection. (And what in truth was that divine power which JESUS CHRIST was to confer on His apostles, but the power of resuscitating souls dead through sin?)

The apostles are assembled together, trembling with fear in the upper chamber. They are shut up for fear of the Jews, who have crucified their master two days previously. . . . Suddenly, the doors being shut, Jesus appears in the midst of them. "Peace be with you," saith He, "it is I, be not afraid." They are terrified, they will not believe what their eyes behold! But they touch the sacred body, the wounds in the hands, in the feet, in the side. And they fall at the feet of the Saviour, risen from the dead, and adore Him.

Jesus breathed upon them: *"Receive the Holy Ghost,"* saith He to them: *"As My Father sent Me, so I send you."* That is, as My Father sent Me, the Saviour of mankind, I, equal with my Father, eternal and omnipotent like Him, send you. I send you to be the saviour of your brethren; I send you as depositaries of those treasures of salvation which I have amassed to shed forth upon mankind; depositaries and dispensers of My sacraments, which I have made to contain all the merits of My Passion and death. *"As My Father sent Me, so I send you.* RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST. *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."*

Is there any need, I ask, to argue on such words? Who will venture to deny that JESUS CHRIST here gives to His Apostles, the first priests and pastors of His Church, the power of pardoning or retaining sins, according as they shall see fit? Who can deny that He establishes them here as judges of all consciences, judges with full power to pardon or retain?

Therefore, it is He, JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God made Man, who has willed and ordained that every man who has committed sin and wishes to be pardoned, should have recourse to the ministry of His priests, who are commissioned to judge his soul, and to pronounce, in the name of God, his sentence. And it is therefore He, and He only, who has instituted, commanded, and imposed confession on the world.

What use, indeed, to the priests of Jesus Christ, would this power of pardoning or retaining sins be, if there were any other means of obtaining their remission? What meaning would the words of the Lord have? Of what use to give the keys of the door to the porter, if the house can be entered by another way?

And besides, what means would the priests have of pronouncing sentence at all reasonably, if the guilty person did not come to own his sins, which often are known only to himself.

Christians are, then, bound to *confess* their sins to their priests, if they wish to obtain the pardon of God. Confession is, by divine right, the road to pardon; he who desires the end, also desires the means; he who does not avail himself of the means, will never attain the end.

Accordingly, in all ages, men have confessed their sins to the Priests.

History has preserved to us the name of Charlemagne's confessor, in the ninth century.

In the fourth century, we see the great St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, engaged in hearing the confession of the penitent: and the contemporary author of his time adds, "that he wept so at the sins which persons confessed to him, that they could not but weep with him."

At the same epoch, we hear of St. Augustine reproaching the African heretics for the pretension, since renewed by Protestants, of not confessing to any but God alone. "Is it then in vain," he exclaimed, "that the Lord has given to the Church the keys of heaven? Has He said in vain, '*All that ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven?*' You scoff at the Gospel! You promise what it refuses!"

In the second and third centuries we also find, in the books which have been preserved of the ancient doctors, striking testimonies of the necessity of confession of sins to a priest, to obtain the pardon of God.

In the catacombs, many seats have been found, which, from their form and position in the chapels, etc., were evidently those belonging to confessionals.

Finally, in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, we see that the converted heathens of Ephesus, obedient to the voice of the Apostle St. Paul, "came *confessing* and declaring their deeds." *

* Confitentes et annunciantes actus suos. (Acts of the Apostles xix. 18, 19.)

Do people confess any thing but guilty deeds sins? And what does this passage in the Book of the Acts mean, if not the confession of sins?

You see, then, that it is God our Saviour, who has given to us confession, as the remedy for all the diseases of our souls, as the means of being restored to the favor of our heavenly Father.

It is an invention full of mercy, of kindness, of consolation. It costs us something, it is true, especially when its long neglect has caused an accumulation of many faults, and very serious ones. But that first moment passes quickly, and then—what joy! what peace! What happiness to find oneself once more, as long ago, the child of God, the friend of JESUS CHRIST! If confession is a yoke, it is that "SWEET *yoke and* LIGHT *burden*" of which our Saviour spoke. "*Take it,*" adds this kind Master, "*and you shall find rest to your souls.*"

Go to confession, and you will see if it is not so.

FORTY-FIRST OBJECTION.

WHAT IS THE USE OF CONFESSION?

ANSWER. In the first place, it is evident that there is some good in it, since it is a divine institution, and God does nothing without a motive.

But you ask further what is the use of confession? *Go to confession, and you will see what the use of it is.*

You will see it is of use in order to become good, from bad that we were before; you will see it is of use in correcting our vices and causing us to advance rapidly in the practice of the most heroic virtues.

What is the use of confession? Ask that poor child whom shameful habits once degraded, while their brand was already stamped on his countenance . . . See him now completely changed in physical appearance as in moral condition. What has he done, then? He has been to confession, he goes to confession . . . formerly he went not.

What is the use of confession? Ask that workman, formerly so dissolute, and with such a passion for the grog-shop; now so chaste, so sober, so well-conducted, so industrious, become in a short time a model for all his comrades! His wife and children find that confession is of some use.

What is the use of confession? Ask that poor woman, overwhelmed with misery, burdened with several children, ill-used by her husband . . . She has often wished, the hapless creature, to go and end her sorrows in the river . . . The thought of God and of her children has arrested her. She approaches the confessional . . . I know not what were the words said to her, but see her returning to her home, with a peaceful heart, and cheerful countenance. She bears her sorrows more patiently; endures her husband's harsh treatment in silence . . . He is surprised at the change at first, then he admires it, then he loves it, then he imitates it. Reckon up: one suicide less; a mother preserved to her six or

seven children; a well-conducted household and one virtuous family more in the world.

After this poor woman, it is perhaps a servant that we see, who, during many years, continued to make his *small private profits* somewhat boldly, at his master's expense. Remorseful feelings take possession of his mind; he seeks the priest . . . If the master takes heed to his affairs, he will see his expenses diminished, without his house being less well kept up . . . And one day he receives a banknote worth four or five hundred francs from an unknown quarter. *

Reckon up: a thief less in the world, perhaps the shameful stigma of the galleys averted from a respectable family; an honest servant more.

What is the use of confession? Ask the poor inhabitants of any district. The wealthy proprietor of the surrounding lands left them to suffer want and poverty; spending all his fortune on himself . . . Some little time since he went to confession, and still goes . . . and see him become the father of his unfortunate tenants; he

* Jean Jacques Rousseau, in spite of his religious hatred, himself acknowledged the utility of confession: "*What restitutions and reparations,*" he says in his *Emile*, "*confession is the cause of, among Catholics!*"

A priest one day had occasion to remit to a Protestant minister who was in the habit of turning into derision Catholic confession and communion, a considerable sum of money which had been stolen from him. This remarkably practical argument made a great impression on the mind of the minister. "*It must be owned,*" he has since said, "*that confession is a very good thing!*"

even anticipates their necessities. They, poor creatures, find that confession is of some use!

Confession is the *shield of perseverance and virtue.* It is the bark, rough and harsh to the touch, I own; but the protecting bark which preserves intact that wonderful fruit which is called *conscience.*

Confession gives back and preserves that peace of mind without which there is no happiness.

It prevents innumerable crimes and misfortunes.

It raises up the poor sinner, whose weakness has separated him from God! It, above all, consoles the dying man about to appear before his God and his Judge!*

What a change would be visible in France if all were to go to confession, with all sincerity and seriousness, as they ought!

*Monsieur Tissot, a celebrated Genevese physician, and, like nearly all the inhabitants of that unhappy town, Geneva, a Protestant, once cited with admiration an instance of an unlooked-for recovery of a Catholic lady supposed to be dying, the result of confession. This lady became so calm, and her mind seemed so completely peaceful, after receiving the Sacraments of the Church, that the effect became apparent also in her bodily health. The fever diminished, and thus the alarming symptoms gradually disappeared, and the patient became convalescent. "*How great, then,*" said Mons. Tissot, "*must the influence of confession be over Catholics!*"

Another Protestant physician, Mons. Badel, owns the same opinion. He proves by various examples, "that confession is serviceable, not only to individuals, but to society at large, and that it deserves the attention of all who seek the welfare of the human race."

The laws and the police would be much less frequently called on for interference. In this single law of the Church, "you must confess all your sins, at least once a year," there would be power enough to regenerate the country, and arrest those revolutions which so frequently have disturbed its peace.

Judge the tree, then, by its fruits.

It is the same with confession as with religion itself; its only enemies are ignorance, prejudice, and the passions. †

† The eminent physician Dr. Forbes, in his late work, "Memorandums made in Ireland, in the autumn of 1852," has borne such strong testimony in favor of the Catholic doctrine of Confession, and one at the same time so valuable, as proceeding from a Protestant author, that I cannot forbear quoting what he has written on the subject.—E. S. M. Y.

"At any rate the result of my inquiries is, that—whether right or wrong in a theological or rational point of view—this instrument of confession is, among the Irish of the humbler classes, a direct preservative against certain forms of immorality at least."—P. 81, vol. II.

"Among other charges preferred against Confession, in Ireland and elsewhere, is the facility it affords for corrupting the female mind, and of its actually leading to such corruption . . . So far from such corruption resulting from confessional, it is the general belief in Ireland—a belief expressed to me by many trustworthy men in all parts of the country, and by Protestants as well as Catholics—that the singular purity of female life among the lower classes there, is, in a considerable degree, dependent on Confession."—P. 83, vol. II.

"With a view of testing, as far as was practicable, the truth of the theory respecting the influence of Confession on this branch of morals, I have obtained through the courtesy of the Poor Law Commissioners, a return

FORTY-SECOND OBJECTION.

I DO NOT NEED TO GO TO CONFESSION. I HAVE NOTHING TO REPROACH MYSELF WITH; I HAVE NEITHER KILLED NOR ROBBED ANY ONE, NOR HAVE I INJURED ANY ONE. I SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO SAY.

ANSWER. And is this the result of your examination of conscience? My good friend, one of two things, then, must be true: either you are an exception to all men, or else you do not see clearly into your own conscience.

And shall I say it to you frankly? *I am sure* you are a man like the rest of men, and that the second supposition alone is the true one.

You have nothing to reproach yourself with? Let us examine a little. It would be singular enough, were I to see more clearly into your conscience than you do yourself.

of the number of legitimate and illegitimate children, in the workhouses of each of the four provinces in Ireland, on a particular day, viz.: the 27th of November, 1852. . . . It is curious to remark how striking the results there conveyed correspond with the Confessional theory: the proportion of illegitimate children coinciding almost exactly with the relative proportion of the two religions in each province; being large where the Protestant element is large, and small where it is small." etc.—P. 245, vol. II.

"Memorandums made in Ireland, by John Forbes M.D., F.R.S. Hon. D. C. L. Oxon, Physician to Her Majesty's Household, author of a Physician's Holiday," etc.

1. Let us first consider how you stand with regard to God. You will acknowledge, of course, that you owe Him *something*. He is not your Creator, your Master, your Father, your last end, *for nothing*.

Do you adore Him? Do you pray to Him *daily?* Do you give Him thanks for His benefits bestowed on you?

Do you implore His pardon for your transgression of His law? Do you obey that law?

Does the thought of HIM who should be your first and chief occupation, enter at all into your daily life? The poor idolatrous savages honor their false gods. And you, who know the true and living God, do not you live as if He did not exist?

Here, then, is one point which you had not well examined, when you just now said that you had nothing to reproach yourself with, and that you would be puzzled to know what to say to the ghostly father.

2. And your duties toward others; are you always faithful to them? Look into your conscience an instant; here again how much is wanting?

Fraternal, sincere, and efficacious charity; devotion to others; mercy toward the poor; indulgence for the failings of your neighbors; respect for their good name; forgiveness of injuries; mutual assistance; good example; duties as a citizen; family duties—the duties of a good son, good father, of a good husband; of a good master and good servant; of a good and faithful friend; of a conscientious workman, or a just

and humane employer, etc.; the list is a long one. Do you fulfil them all?

Here then, too, you have excellent matter for your next confession.

3. In your duties toward yourself, I think I can guarantee, that if you neglect the practice of religion, there will be still more matter for confession. Let us see:

You have an immortal soul; what care do you take of it? You live almost as if you had none.

When you perform some benevolent action, what are the motives which animate you? You know that the intention makes the action, as says the proverb. A bad intention renders the best seeming actions bad. Is it a motive of duty which inspires your actions? Is it the desire of accomplishing the will of God, of doing what is pleasing in His sight, or is it not rather personal interest, ostentation, the desire of being held in esteem and consideration by the world? . . .

How do you stand with regard to sobriety, to temperance?

How do you stand, above all, as regards *purity?* . . . Were your son to conduct himself in your presence as you conduct yourself in the presence of God who sees all things, would you not banish him from your house as a disgrace to you? . . . Did any other man speak to your wife, or sister, or daughter, as you have so often done to other women and to young girls, what would you think of him? would you not consider him to be highly culpable?

And are you not contaminated by that which

This scrutiny of your conscience might be pushed much further even; the mine is not exhausted, I assure you.

Enough has been here said, however, to convince you, if you wish to be convinced, that, notwithstanding your perfect innocence, you have done enough to make an excellent, long, and serious confession. You have on the one hand the sins; I have just pointed out to you the greatest; on the other, I doubt not, you have the good-will. You know some good priest, probably, who will be enchanted to see you, and to pardon you, in the name of God.

Go, then, and seek him, and with a willing mind.

It is only the first step that is hard to take; the difficulty, the shame, is soon over; the joy, the peace of mind abides.

"But I have not been for so long a time!" The greater reason have you for going, you stand in more need of it.

"But I should have so much to say." So much the better; the big fish are the best. Confessors like great sinners better than little ones, from the moment that they repent.

"But I can never recollect all." What signifies! Tell what you do recollect; repent of all, and God, who requires only the will to confess all, will pardon all. Repentance is the great thing in confession.

Take my advice, and go to confession. You will see that you will be happy, and quite enchanted, when you shall have got through with it.

True happiness on earth is in peace of mind, the fruit of a good conscience.

FORTY-THIRD OBJECTION.

IT IS SO TIRESOME TO GO TO CONFESSION.

ANSWER. Accordingly, I do not advise you to go for the sake of amusement!

Every thing which is good and useful is not always amusing. It is not *amusing* to take physic when one is ill. However, one takes it for the sake of being cured. It is not *amusing* to work from morning till night to gain a livelihood for oneself and family, to lay by savings for one's old age. But then it is useful, it is necessary to do so; and one works, *although* the work may be laborious, disagreeable, difficult.

So it is with confession. It is a remedy, a disagreeable remedy, so much the more disagreeable, in proportion as we have more need of it; but then it is an *indispensable* remedy. It is not for my amusement that I go to confession, but to be cured of my spiritual maladies, and to preserve my spiritual health.

Have a little more energy, then. Do not allow yourself to be overcome with the great disease of our age, which is a *weakening of the relish for* DUTY. DUTY, that great and sublime word, conveys no meaning to many minds. They comprehend nothing but PLEASURE.

Beware of this deplorable weakness, and remember the judgments of God!

FORTY-FOURTH OBJECTION.

TO GO TO CONFESSION WAS ALL VERY WELL WHEN I WAS AT SCHOOL; BUT NOW!

ANSWER. *But now,* when I have ten times more need of it, I no longer go!

But now, that my passions are developing themselves, that I am surrounded with the dangers of the world, exposed to evil on all sides, what is the use of taking precautions? . . .

Poor human heart! how it wanders at random, when, instead of obeying reason, it pretends to guide it.

Confession is needful at every period of life, because it is always necessary to obey the laws of God, promulgated by the Catholic Church. Now, the law of God commands *every man* capable of committing sin, without any exception, to confess his sins at least once a year.

At every period of life, one stands in need of confession, because at every period of life we commit sin, because at any period of life we may die, and confession alone is the divine remedy which effaces sin, and keeps the soul in readiness to appear before God.

In proportion as man advances onward in this life, the combats he has to encounter become more violent, the attacks he has to sustain more

frequent and formidable, his many foes more numerous still. . . . Is it, then, the time to lay down his arms?

FORTY-FIFTH OBJECTION.

I KNOW SOME DEVOTEES WHO ARE NO BETTER THAN THEIR NEIGHBORS. SO-AND-SO, WHO GOES TO CONFESSION, IS NONE THE BETTER FOR IT.

ANSWER. That proves, 1, That either the person you name does not confess properly, and is not seriously a Christian;

2. Or else, that his nature is singularly callous, since so powerful an influence as Religion does not render him better than most men;

3. Or else (and this is the most probable) that you are mistaken, and *judge him unjustly.*

Christians, please to remember, do not cease to be men because they are Christians. They retain the weakness and inconsistency that belongs to poor human nature, which has been so profoundly corrupted by sin; and, consequently, their actions are not always in accordance with their principles, their desires, and their resolutions.

But if religion does not correct *all* the defects of our characters, if it does not entirely and immediately destroy all imperfections, at least it diminishes them, and destroys them little by little. It unceasingly commands us to combat them; it offers very simple and powerful means of becoming not merely better, but as perfect as humanity allows. Look at the Saints; look at St. Francis

de Sales, St. Francis Xavier, St. Vincent de Paul; they were *real Christians,* nothing more!

Thus, upright and courageous souls, who make use of these means, correct themselves promptly, and end by becoming first better, then good, and then by attaining to excellence.

What is very certain, is, that the majority of those who exclaim against devotees, are, three-fourths of the time, ten times worse than they: they see the mote in the eye of their neighbor, and do not perceive the beam which is in their own.

Religion cannot but render us better. He who has defects, and yet is a Christian, would have these defects, in a much greater degree, if he were not one.

And further, he would possess the great and capital defect which you do, who blame him for being religious; that of not rendering to God the worship which He requires from all men, that of adoration, prayer, and obedience.

FORTY-SIXTH OBJECTION.

HOW CAN THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST BE REALLY PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST? IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

ANSWER. Your stomach is changing bread and meat into flesh and blood every day. You do *not understand how* this change is brought about;

but you know that the change is *possible,* from the fact.

Now, if God, by the power of the stomach which He gave you, can change bread, meat, and wine, into flesh, blood, bone and sinew, what is to prevent Him from using the delegated power of the priesthood to change bread and wine into His own body and blood?

You say the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is impossible!

I have but one thing to say in answer to you, but it is sufficient.

It is so; *therefore it is possible.*

It is so; *therefore you ought to believe it,* though you may not understand how it can be so.

I say, then, that *it is so,* that Jesus Christ is truly and really present in the Holy Eucharist, and that after the consecration in the Mass, it is no longer bread on the altar, in the priest's hands, but the living body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, veiled under the simple *appearances* of bread and wine.

To convince you of this, I shall not spread before your mind the history of all Christian ages, from the Apostles down to the present day, believing, adoring, loudly proclaiming this Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It would, certainly, be a grand and convincing fact, to see the greatest geniuses, the most profound and learned doctors, adoring with the most full and lively faith the Sacred Mystery of the altar.

But besides that this course would lead us into developments too diffuse for the space of

this work, I wish merely to trust to your candid judgment and honesty; to these, only, I now address myself, and I will only cite to you word for word, and almost without any comment, the very words of Jesus Christ, who declares that the Eucharist is Himself, His body, His flesh, His blood.

He speaks of the Eucharist on two occasions in the Gospel: the first to promise its institution (about a year before His Passion); the second (on the eve of His Passion), to institute it, and thus to accomplish His promise.

His first saying respecting it, is in Chapter VI. of St. John, 47th and following verses; it is this: I propose its consideration to your own good sense: *"Amen, amen, I say unto you, he that* BELIEVETH *in Me hath everlasting life."* He first exacts faith in His words; for what He is about to say is the profoundest mystery of faith.

"I am the Bread of Life."

*"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give,** IS MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD."

The Jews, to whom He spake, said to themselves what you say to yourselves, "How can

*Observe these words; Jesus Christ *promises* this mysterious bread; He does not give it as yet; He will do so at a later period; "the bread *that I shall give.*"

It is not, them, as the Protestants say, a figurative manner of speaking of the doctrine which He preached, for He actually was then giving that doctrine; we cannot *promise* that which we have already given, and which we are giving at this very moment.

He give us His flesh to eat?" How can that be? And they would not believe Him.

See how our Lord Jesus Christ affirms again His real presence in the bread which He promised to them: "AMEN, AMEN, I SAY UNTO YOU, *except you* EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN, *and* DRINK HIS BLOOD, *you shall not have life in you.*

"*He that eateth* MY FLESH, *and drinketh* MY BLOOD, *hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day.*

"FOR MY FLESH IS MEAT INDEED, AND MY BLOOD IS DRINK INDEED.

"*He that eateth* MY FLESH, *and drinketh* MY BLOOD, *abideth in Me, and I in Him. . . . He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.*"

What do you say to this? Do you not believe Jesus Christ's own words, affirming to you that the Eucharist is His body and blood, and with an undeniable clearness of expression, so overwhelming, that Protestants have struggled vainly during three hundred years, and racked their brains in every way to escape from the evidence which these words carry with them?

2. If these first words relating to the promise are as clear as noonday, those relating to the institution of the Eucharist are not less so.

On the eve of His Passion, our Lord, after the supper, takes bread in His divine and venerable hands, blesses it, and gives it to His Apostles, saying: "*Take ye and eat, this is My Body.*"

Is this clear or not? THIS which I hold and give to you, IS, what? MY BODY.

Then He gives to His Apostles, who were

His first priests, the command and the power to do what He had just done Himself, by adding these words, "*And you, as often as you shall do these things, you shall do them in commemoration of Me.*"

A judge takes good care that jurymen understand the law, and the charge to the jury, before they hang a man. On the two occasions in question our Lord took good care that his hearers understood His meaning. Some of them said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it? . . . After this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve: "Will you also go away?" As if to say: You can go if you wish, but I mean what I say: "The bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world." And Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." This means: "Your words settle the matter for ever."

The apostles and other hearers evidently understood our Lord's meaning: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat; this is my body which shall be delivered for you. . . . This chalice is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. . . . Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." (1. Cor. xi. 23.)

Now, how could one be guilty of profanation of the body and blood of the Lord, if that body and blood be not there? This passage from St. Paul, as well as the above words of St. Peter, shows how the apostles understood our Lord.

Again; set up the whole Christian world as a jury in the case. *All* Christians for sixteen hundred years, and *most* Christians for nearly two thousand years, understood our Lord to mean a *real presence* in the Eucharist, and not a figurative presence. If they were wrong they were idolaters; and Christ would be the cause of that idolatry.

Does it not seem strange that a small section of Christians, who appeared on earth sixteen hundred years after Christ, should be the first to whom Christ revealed His true meaning? For history shows that the doctrine of the *Real Presence* was *always* believed in the Catholic Church.

The same argument holds for the *Infallibility,* and every other doctrine of the Church.

Men of honesty and truth, hear and judge: THIS IS MY BODY!!!

For myself, I declare this one saying is sufficient for me, and not only is it to me the convincing proof of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, but it proves to me, in a no less irrefragable manner, His divinity. No man has ever said, or *ever could say* such a thing!

A very simple observation will perhaps facilitate your belief in the Eucharistic mystery; it is this:

Nature offers to our sight numerous examples

of the so-called *impossible* change of one sub stance into another.

The most striking of all is that of corpor nourishment. The bread which I eat is change by the mysterious process of digestion, into m body, my flesh and blood. The substance bread is *changed* into that of my body.

That which God causes daily to take place us in a natural manner, why can He not cause t take place supernaturally in the mystery of th Eucharist?

You see, then, that it is not IMPOSSIBLE tha through divine Omnipotence, the bread and wi should be changed upon our altars into the sub stance of the Body and Blood of our Lord JESU CHRIST; and that the Church, in teaching th doctrine of His real presence in the Blessed Sac rament, does not teach, as the ignorant and un thinking declare, an absurdity, or that which i impossible and revolting to reason.

NOW, HOW does this wonderful prodigy com to pass? *I do not know*, and the greatest doctor do not know any more than others. It is th mystery of faith, the secret of the Almighty What we do know is, that IT IS SO, and that sufficient.

Through this adorable presence, JESUS CHRIS the King of souls, the Life of Christians, th Head of the Church, the refuge of sinners, th merciful Saviour, the Consoler of all griefs, ever in the midst of His people. God an Man at the same time, He is the living bon

which unites us to His Father and our Father. He adores Him perfectly and supplies the imperfections of our homage. He asks mercy for the continual sins of the world.

He is present during all the generations of mankind, whom he loves and has saved alike, so as to receive from each succeeding one, to the end of the world, the homage of its faith, of its adoration, of its worship, and of its prayers.

If the Blessed Sacrament is the mystery of faith, it is, also, and still more so, *the mystery of Love!*

Let us, then, believe, love, and adore.

FORTY-SEVENTH OBJECTION.

I DO NOT NEED TO GO TO MASS: I PRAY TO GOD JUST AS WELL AT HOME.

ANSWER. Can you really pray just as well at home? Does not the holy silence of God's temple inspire you? Are you not affected by the evident devotion of the worshippers? And do you really pray to Him *at home?* Pardon me if I am wrong; but I have a slight suspicion that you do not pray to Him any more at home than at Church.

The real question, you see, is not to know whether you can pray to God as well at home as during Mass, but to know whether God *wills* that on Sundays and festival days you should

hear Mass, and pray there instead of at home only.

Now, He does will it.

We have already discussed this together, and decided that the religious laws of the pastors of the Catholic Church are binding in conscience, because they are derived from the authority delegated to them by Jesus Christ. *"He who heareth you heareth Me; and he who despiseth you despiseth Me."*

When the Church commands us to be present at the celebration of Mass, on Sundays and festival days, it is disobedience toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and toward God, to neglect to go.

The reason which caused this law to be made is very important; the law itself, accordingly, is not less so. It is the absolute necessity of a public worship rendered to God.

We do not only live individually as men, as Christians; we are also *a religious society;* and this society, of which we are members, being established by God Himself, has duties to fulfil to Him, as well as each one of us in particular.

Now, the public worship of this Christian Society (or Church) is precisely this *attendance at the Sacrifice of the Mass,* which unites us all, in the presence of our God, in His temple, on days set apart for this purpose, some actually by God Himself,* others by our Lord, others by the Apostles or their successors.

* It was God Himself who instituted from the beginning of the world the seventh day's rest, in perpetual remembrance of the creation and of eternity. The Sun-

To abstain from associating, at these solemn moments, with the rest of the Christian family, is to renounce, in some measure, the title of Christian, of child of God, disciple of Jesus Christ, and member of the Catholic Church.

Thus, it is *a great sin* to neglect hearing Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, without a real and good reason for so doing.

The serious nature of such negligence may be better understood as the grandeur, holiness, and divine excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass is understood.

The Sacrifice of the MASS is the core of Religion.

It is the unbloody continuation, through all ages and generations, of the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

There is no essential difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass. *It is the same and the only Sacrifice, offered under a different form.* The *priest* is the same; Jesus Christ in person offered the sacrifice on Calvary; on the altar He makes the sacrifice in the person of the priest. The *victim* is the *same.* His body poured forth His precious blood on Calvary; on the altar the same sacred body and precious blood are veiled in the semblance of bread and wine. The circumstances and appear-

day is the Lord's day, when we must specially occupy ourselves about Him, and prepare ourselves for our eternal destiny, which will be the eternal rest and the eternal Sabbath.

ance of the sacrifice are different; the substance is the same.

By the mysterious and divine words uttered by the priest, or rather by Jesus Christ, who speaks by His minister, the same miracle of love which was operated at the Last Supper, on Holy Thursday, is daily renewed on our altars. The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and only preserve the mere appearance of bread and wine; so that there is really nothing on the altar, after the consecration, but the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ living, and thus uniting in the Blessed Sacrament, all the mysteries of His mortal and of His glorious life.

Seek, then, to understand the grandeur of your faith, and alter your language regarding it.

Come with the rest of your brethren, come to your Saviour; it is for you that He descends upon our altars, it is for your salvation that He immolates Himself in this great mystery. Without Him you cannot save your soul: and yet you neglect Him, you despise Him, you prefer futile occupations, follies, trifles of all kinds to Him!

Return to yourself, I beseech you, fulfil a duty which is as easy as it is serious and necessary.

Go on Sunday and prostrate yourself before your good God, to take a review of the week past, and make a holy provision for the week following. God will bless you, and you will feel happy.

FORTY-EIGHTH OBJECTION.

I HAVE NO TIME.

ANSWER. Have you time to eat and drink? No doubt.

And why do you eat and drink?

What a question! To keep myself alive. Nourishment is the life of our bodies.

Which is of the greater value, your soul or your body?

What strange questions! My soul, of course.

In that case, then, take at least as much care of your soul as you do of your body! You find, you take time enough to insure the welfare of your body, and you do not devote any to that of your soul.

I should like to see your employer undertake to deprive you of the time for your meals! You would certainly quit him, him and his shop, without much ceremony, and say, *before every thing else,* one must live.

Well, I say to you, and much more urgently, too, *before every thing else,* before securing the welfare of your body, before EVERY THING, do not let your soul perish, which is the principal part of you; your soul, which makes you a man; for by our bodies we are but animals; it is the soul which makes us men, and distinguishes us from the brutes.

Religion gives you the life of the soul in uniting it with God, and you say, I have no time to practice religion? Very well, then *take* it, this

necessary time. Take it, at all costs, no matter how, or at whose expense.

No one in the world has the right to deprive you of it, neither your employers, your teachers, your father or mother; to this there is *no* exception!

The eternal salvation of your soul cannot be taken from you by any creature living, and if any one were to attempt to deprive you of this most sacred of all your rights, it would then be the moment to put into practice this great rule of the apostles: *It is better to obey God than man.*

"But my trade," you say, "prevents my laboring for my salvation."

Is that true? If so, it is most extraordinary; for we find among the *Saints* men of every condition; kings and shoemakers, laborers and doctors, mechanics, soldiers and priests.

Our Lord thinks differently; for He says: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss if his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.)

Life passes quickly, indeed; but eternity remains. What advantage would it be to you, to gain the whole world, if you were to lose your soul?

But let us be honest. Is it really true that you cannot be saved, that you cannot live in a Christian way, in the condition of life you are in?

Is it this trade of yours which prevents you

from offering up a short prayer morning and evening?

Is it that which prevents you from lifting up your heart toward God from time to time during the day, from offering up to Him your prayers, your labor, your privations?

It is not your trade which makes you swear and blaspheme the name of God, frequent theatres of bad repute, and dancing saloons, taverns, and haunts of vice and debauchery. The time which you thus spend would be a hundred times more than enough to make you a good Christian, were you to employ it in securing your salvation.

No more, then, is it your trade which hinders you, on the approach of the Church's festivals, from seeking in the evening, after your day's work is done, a confessor, so as to receive, together with the assurance of forgiveness for your sins, advice and encouragement to enable you to live better for the future.

In a matter of conscience, remember we have always *time to do what we wish to do.* But we must wish it earnestly, energetically, with perseverance.

Never say again, therefore, "I have no time to live as a Christian should do," for you would be deceiving yourself.

Say, if you will, "I have not as much time, as many facilities, as I should wish." Granted, but after all it is the *heart* and the will that God asks from us; and it does not demand much time to be able to love God, to avoid sin, and repent of one's faults; it is not absolutely necessary to

spend a great deal of time every day in saying one's prayers; it does not demand much time to hear a low Mass said on Sunday, barely half an hour, in fact, and to go to confession four or five times a year.

Others do all this, and more besides. I know some who never pass a month without approaching the sacraments; and they are not the worse workmen for doing that. How do they find themselves able to do this? Imitate the good-will which they show, and like them you will live as a Christian; and like them, you will go to heaven instead of hell at your death.

To him who will not give his *time* to God, God will refuse his *eternity*.

FORTY-NINTH OBJECTION.

I CANNOT! IT IS TOO DIFFICULT!

ANSWER. Say rather that *you will not*. We can do all we choose to do, in whatever regards conscience and salvation.

What is wanting is not the power, it is the courage. *We dread* labor, we shrink from it. The true Christian is brave; like a good soldier, who is only the more stimulated to combat by the attacks of the enemy, he fears nothing. Resting on Jesus Christ, from Him he gains the strength which inspires him. If he falls, he rises again, and renews the combat with greater strength than he had before.

"I cannot!" The sluggard, who in the morning yawns, stretches himself, and again turns to sleep, instead of doing his work, says also, "*I cannot!*"

A day will come when you will see that you could. But the time will then be gone, the hour for working will have passed away.

You will be before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and you will hear His awful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels."* On that day, you will understand that you COULD!

However, there is one thing true enough in what you say. You certainly cannot conquer your evil passions, and practice the lofty virtues of the Christian, if you do not seek the necessary strength, in the place where it is to be found.

No, you cannot avoid the sins which you habitually fall into, if you do not employ those means which JESUS CHRIST your Saviour has placed for this purpose in the hands of His Church.

You know what these means are; in those happier days when you were good, pure, honest, because you were a Christian in fact, you adopted them, and you know by experience all their sweetness, all their efficacy. They are—

Prayer;

The sanctification of the Sunday;

Religious instruction;

* St. Matthew xxv.

The frequenting, above all, of confession and Holy Communion;

The avoidance of the occasions of sin, of unlawful amusements, bad companions, and bad books.

Without these means, no, you certainly cannot be good. With them, not only you can be good, but there is nothing more pleasant or easy.

How many young men there are, men, too, of every age and condition of life, who have more violent passions than you have, and yet who subdue them, and who have mastered them! Many are more exposed to temptations than you are, and have more obstacles of every kind to surmount. What they do, why cannot you do?

I knew an old soldier who had been in the habit of swearing by the name of God from his childhood. He could not utter two sentences without swearing. One day, touched by a good exhortation he heard, he resolved to fulfil his duties as a Christian. He determined energetically to conquer this defect; and in a fortnight's time he succeeded. Every time that the name of God escaped his lips, he said to himself: *"My God forgive me, Thy holy name be blessed!"* He did the same whenever he heard his comrades fall into the same sin. "I am obliged," he said to me, "to do my best; I catch myself more than fifty times a day."

We have often seen men addicted to the terrible vice of drunkenness, obtain a still more difficult victory over it, with a like courage. The celebrated General Cambronne, when a common soldier, had this detestable habit. One day, when

intoxicated, he struck an officer, and was condemned to death. His Colonel, who was much attached to him, because of his brave and loyal character, obtained his pardon on condition that he would never drink any more wine. Twenty-five years after, Corporal Cambronne was General Cambronne, and immortalized by his heroic retreat at Waterloo. Surrounded by his family in Paris, he lived quietly, loved and esteemed by all. His old colonel invited him one day to dinner, with some old comrades in arms. The place of honor at the host's right hand was reserved for Cambronne. Some very exquisite wine, kept for great occasions, was put on the table. "Ah! General," said the old Colonel, "you will tell me that this is something rare, this wine;" and he was about to fill Cambronne's glass. He declines it, the other insists; Cambronne becomes annoyed. "But, General, I assure you, it is excellent!" "That is not the question!" Cambronne replied, quickly; "it is a question of my honor! my promise when a corporal, have you forgotten it, Colonel? Since that day I have never touched a single drop of wine. My word and my conscience are of more consequence than your wine!"

There was energy of character! That was a man to admire!

Be of good courage then; that is what is wanting. A MAN IS A CHRISTIAN FROM THE MOMENT THAT HE WILLS IT.

FIFTIETH OBJECTION.

I SHOULD BE LAUGHED AT! WE MUST NOT BE SINGULAR; WE MUST DO AS OTHERS DO.

ANSWER. A very weak argument. When Christ was condemned, many of the Jews did not protest against His condemnation because they *did not wish to be singular*. They preferred *to do as others do;* in other words, they condemned our Saviour to death.

Alas! How many are like sheep in this respect! How many go to hell because others do!

"We must not be singular!" you say. Why not? We profess to be followers of Christ. He was singular.

Evil abounds, and good is rare; there are many wicked men and few good ones, many heathens and few Christians. The bad are those who form the mass; it is they who establish the fashion, the customs. Those who desire to follow the other road, which is the right one, are then compelled to be singular.

Very well! This very singularity you must adopt. It is the sign, the necessary condition of your eternal happiness.

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST has declared this in positive terms: "Enter ye in," said He,* "at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the

* St. Matthew vii.

gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!"

"And fear ye not them," He adds in another part of the Gospel, "that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell."* "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father, who is in heaven. But HE THAT SHALL PERSEVERE TO THE END," in spite, that is, of all obstacles, all scorn and derision, in spite of the examples and temptations held out by the wicked, "HE SHALL BE SAVED."

Is this warning plain? It is the eternal *Judge* who declares it to us. It is He who never speaks in vain, and who proclaims with His own lips that "heaven and earth shall pass away," but that "His words shall not pass away." We must, then, under pain of eternal damnation, be in the world as different from the world.

We must glory in this singularity, far from dreading it, and being ashamed of it. It is that which makes us Christians.

"But I shall be laughed at!" Do you give up your political opinions because a neighbor laughs at you for holding them? Not at all. You try to show him that his opinions and principles are wrong. Why not do the same in regard to religion? Because you are too weak, too cowardly. Well! let those laugh at you that like; you will not die of being laughed at! Laugh at those who laugh at you; they are the most worthy of

* St. Matthew xxviii.

ridicule, and you are, in reality, the wise man of them all. Which ought to laugh at the other? the fool at the wise man, or the wise man at the fool?

If any one were to laugh at you because you eat and drink, or because you walk with your feet, and not on your head, would you leave off eating, and begin to walk on all-fours? No. And why not? Because what you did was right and rational, and what you were asked to do was absurd.

How much more absurd and foolish is it, then, to lose your soul for the sake of pleasing some silly madcaps, whose want of principle you despise in the bottom of your heart! The praise of people of that stamp is the thing to be ashamed of: their blame is an honor. It is a sign that you are not like them.

Do not, however, exaggerate the thing. You will not be alone in the right path. Though, it is true, there are more bad than good men, the number of the good is not so small as is supposed; above all, at the present day, when religion is resuming her wholesome influence over men's minds more and more. In the enlightened classes of society, it is now an honorable recommendation to be a Christian.

A few years ago, young C, one of the most distinguished pupils at the Polytechnic School, happened to lose his beads. One of his comrades found them, and during their time of recreation he called together the school, fastened the chaplet to one of the trees in the court, and with an air of defiance called out, "Let the person

who owns this chaplet come and claim it." "It is I who have lost it," young C quietly replied, coming forward into the midst of the assembled pupils; "that chaplet is a souvenir given to me by my mother; I set a great value on it, and recite it every day." "Bravo!" a loud voice was heard to exclaim. They all looked round; it was the general in command of the school. "Well done, my young friend," he added, shaking the young Christian's hand; "you are a man of feeling and energy. Go on thus; you will make your way well in the world!" Young C was the first who left the school; but during the whole time of his stay there, he was the most esteemed and best liked of all the pupils.

Be good-humored, obliging, amiable with every one; laugh with them about things which you may laugh at without displeasing God; and they will soon let you alone about religion, if it so happens that they have attacked you on that point.

I know an *Alsacian,* a good Christian, who, on joining his regiment, was laughed at by several of his comrades. They called him *devotee, bigot, hypocrite,* and such like words. One day, when this sort of battle was being carried on more sharply than usual, he asked his captain's permission to assemble his company in the barrack-room. He mounted on a bench, and thus addressed them: "You may ridicule me as much as you please: you will not make me change my ways at all. God is of more importance than you are, is He not? Well! I would rather please Him than please you. *Go to bed, if you are sulky*

*about that!** The whole regiment might turn to, but I would never yield an inch." His comrades began to laugh and applaud him, and from that time they never said an offensive word to the worthy fellow.

One day, a traveller made his appearance at a *table d'hote;* it was Friday; he called for abstinence fare. Some of the persons at dinner began to titter; and one, bolder than the rest, addresses him:

"Monsieur abstains?" says he, with a bantering air.

"I do, Monsieur," replies the traveller, in the same tone: "and Monsieur, he eats meat?"

"I do, Monsieur," said the first, a little discomfited at finding himself laughed at in turn.

"So much the worse for Monsieur," replies the traveller. "Does Monsieur think, then, that a man of honor ought to prefer a cutlet to his conscience? For my part, I prefer my conscience to a cutlet."

Those who had been turning him into ridicule now took his side of the question; and better still, one person present, looking toward him, congratulated him on his firmness in performing this duty: "I should be sorry, Monsieur, to see you the only person here who did so," he said; "I shall profit by the delicate lesson you have given us; for I am also a Catholic. *Garçon,* bring me, too, *du maigre"* (abstinence fare).

* This is a proverb, here used with equal humor and good-humor, by our soldier to give his comrades' ideas a new turn, and raise a laugh in his own favor.

Never shrink weakly before a word, before a look, before a smile.

Let *those* lose their souls who have them to lose: you, who know what your soul is worth, save it. Let him laugh who wishes to laugh. *He will laugh to the purpose who laughs* LAST, says the proverb.

FIFTY-FIRST OBJECTION.

ONE OUGHT NOT TO BE A BIGOT.

ANSWER. Certainly one ought not to be a *bigot!* Who says you should? Do those who rant most about bigotry really know what bigotry is? If so, it would be well to use the knowledge for their own improvement; for generally they are the most intensely bigoted bigots. They are so deeply immersed in their own little puddle of bigotry that they cannot see a whole ocean of fairness beyond them.

Bigotry is not religion, it is the abuse of it.

The defects of persons who are guilty of that abuse, generally from ignorance, ought not to be imputed to Religion.

Religion is abused, like every good thing in the world. We must reject the abuse, and retain the use. We must be pious, but we must not be bigots. God loves one, but He does not love the other. He desires to behold in our hearts *devotion,* that is, devotedness to His service, devotedness to the duties which He imposes, and love of His commandments; but He does not desire to

see *bigotry* reigning in them, that is to say, those enthusiastic, those narrow-minded or superstitiously religious practices, which often replace the chief object by the accessories, and substitute the means for the end.

Nevertheless, these abuses of religion are not so universal or so heinous as they are generally said to be.

Generally speaking, they do not injure any one, and are only hurtful to those who commit them. Those who fall into these pitiable mistakes are unenlightened persons (usually women, for men are less liable to them), who surround and fatigue themselves with numerous external forms and practices of devotion, good in themselves, but carried to too great a length; who assume a certain strangeness of manner; who torment their consciences in the fear of doing wrong; and who become excited and angry, through misguided zeal, when it would be more prudent and wise to remain silent, etc.

This is bigotry. It is a great defect, but I should be glad to think there were no worse ones here on earth! Those who inveigh so loudly against bigotry, and are indignant at the absurdities it gives rise to, are too often persons who remind one of the criminal, who, sentenced to perpetual hard labor for a frightful *murder* he had committed, was indignant at having given him for his prison companion a *thief!*

They are often more worthy of censure than those whom they attack.

Their profligacy, bad conduct, neglect of the most sacred duties, religious ignorance, licen-

tious conversation, evil example, etc., etc., are not these *abuses?* Are they not crimes?

Their whole life is an *abuse;* and the abuse of devotion is, I venture to say, the only one they never commit. Would it not be as well to exchange this one for the others, I ask?

Do not, then, be a bigot, but a Christian, and a good Christian. Love God, serve Him faithfully, observe all His commandments; fulfil all your duties, so as to be pleasing in the eyes of God, and listen with docility to the teaching of the ministers of Jesus Christ.

FIFTY-SECOND OBJECTION.

A CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TOO TIRESOME. IT IS TOO MELANCHOLY. TO DEPRIVE ONESELF OF EVERY THING, BE AFRAID OF EVERY THING, WHAT A LIFE!

ANSWER. Too tiresome, eh? What do you know about a Christian life? Gently, gently, my good friend! Do not be frightened before you are hurt. A Christian life does not oblige you to "deprive yourself of every thing, and be afraid of every thing." You exaggerate the thing; if the Gospel is a yoke, our Lord Jesus Christ, who imposed it on us, declared Himself that "this yoke is sweet, and this burden light."

You know, I dare say, some pious Christians? Do they look so very depressed, so very gloomy or unhappy?

All those whom I know, on the contrary, have a peculiar expression of peacefulness and joy on their countenances; the very sight of them is pleasant.

I do not, indeed, deny, that to be a really good Christian, it is necessary to keep strict watch over oneself, and shun certain evil or dangerous pleasures. I do not deny that the struggle of the will against evil passions is often a difficult one.

But find, if you can, a condition without sacrifices or struggles! To learn your trade, to make your living, must you not give yourself trouble, and a great deal of trouble?

Do not even our *amusements* compel us to impose some sacrifices on ourselves?

And yet we require that the chief, the most important, the only needful thing, namely, the work of our eternal salvation, should cost nothing! It is impossible.

The world beholds Christians praying, doing penance, imposing restraints on themselves, giving of their means to the poor, stifling their passions, depriving themselves of sensual gratifications, and doing such and such things which make this life rigorous and disagreeable in their eyes.

But this is only the outer rind. Look within, and you will see a heart generous and full of joy, which renders easy, even agreeable, these sacrifices so difficult in appearance.

A good son, who deprives himself of something for his mother's sake, is he not happy in his self-imposed privations?

Christian piety changes into sweetness what

is bitter in the practice of duty; like the vital forces of plant life which change into honey some of the bitter juices which they extract from the earth.

Try, and you will find it so. We must experience these things, words cannot make them understood by those who have not experience.

For this, you have but to carry back your thoughts to the days of your childhood. There are few men who have not felt the happiness of the love of God at the great and solemn moment of their first communion. You were happy then! and why? Because you were pure and innocent, more given to good things; in a word, because you were a Christian.

Be one again, and you will be happy again. The God of your childhood is not changed, as you, alas! are; He still loves you, and awaits the return of the prodigal son. Be not afraid of Him; He is the good Saviour, the refuge of repentant sinners. *"Never,"* he has said to us, *"will I reject him that cometh to me."*

Take this gentle and light yoke of a Christian life, and you will find rest, peace of mind, true joy in this world, and after your death eternal joy in Paradise.

FIFTY-THIRD OBJECTION.

I AM NOT WORTHY TO APPROACH THE SACRAMENTS: WE OUGHT NOT TO ABUSE HOLY THINGS.

ANSWER. True, indeed, you are not worthy,

but will you become worthy by not approaching? No, we should not *refuse* the grace of the Sacraments, nor *abuse* it, but we should *use* it.

Next to sacrilege, the greatest insult we can offer to JESUS CHRIST in the Blessed Sacrament is neglect of it.

There are two kinds of persons who should approach the Sacraments: the pious who desire to persevere in good; and the bad who desire to become good.

In abstaining from them, you fly from life. To heat water again, do you take it away from the fire? To cure a malady, do you leave off the remedy?

The Sacraments are like remedies to the sick. Approach them, then, not because you are worthy (no one is worthy of God), but to become less unworthy; not because you are strong, but to heal your weakness.

Go to JESUS CHRIST; without Him you cannot be saved. Go and seek Him where He is to be found; in confession, by which He purifies His temple of your heart; in the Holy Communion, where He enters in person into that dwelling which He has purified.

Do all that depends on yourself, and fear not. Only have *a willing heart;* you will always return better from it.

FIFTY-FOURTH OBJECTION.

MY SINS ARE TOO GREAT; IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT GOD CAN PARDON ME!

ANSWER. Impossible? Poor soul, you know not the heart of JESUS CHRIST!

Have you committed more sins than Magdalen? Magdalen, a woman of notoriously bad life; Magdalen, a scandalous sinner; who was repulsed by all, as if her touch were contamination! Have you forgotten her history?

The good JESUS has been invited to dine with Simon the Pharisee. All are at table, reclining at it according to the custom of the Jews. A woman enters, she throws herself at the Saviour's feet, and without speaking, bathes them with her tears and covers them with kisses. The Pharisee recognizes her, it is the sinful Magdalen: "If this man were the Son of God," he thought within himself, "He would know that this woman is a sinner!" JESUS, knowing his thoughts, says to him: "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee." "Master," answers the Pharisee, "say it." "A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which, therefore, of the two loveth him the most?" "He, without doubt," answers Simon, "to whom he forgave most." "Thou hast judged rightly," said JESUS CHRIST. And turning to the poor Magdalen, "Dost thou see this woman? I

entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she, with tears, hath washed my feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed my feet. Wherefore, I say to thee, many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." And without heeding the murmurs of the Pharisee: "Woman," said He to SAINT Magdalen, "go in peace and sin no more."

And after this you despair of the goodness of God? Oh! no; the heart of the Saviour is always the same. He expects you with a marvellous patience. Go and cast yourself at His feet, weeping for your sins. They are great, yes; but His goodness is yet greater! He has declared with His divine lips: *"Him who cometh to me I will* NEVER *reject."*

Recall to Him the sufferings which He underwent for you. His manger at Bethlehem, His poverty, His agony, His Passion, His crown of thorns, His flagellation, His Cross, His death. Recall to Him His Mother, that gentle Mother whom He has given to you purposely to be your advocate, your refuge and hope.

Then, with repentance in your heart, go and seek the minister of pardon, the judge who dispenses mercy, the confessor. Entreat his indulgence and aid. He will give them to you, do not be afraid; for God desires that they should always be given to sinners. Then you will hear,

amid your tears, those mighty words of eternal life, which restored Magdalen to life, and which, of *Magdalen the sinner,* has made the admirable *Saint Mary Magdalen!* "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go and sin no more."

FIFTY-FIFTH OBJECTION.

YOUTH MUST PASS.*

ANSWER. Must pass in what? In follies? in sins? in losing one's soul, one's honor, one's health, one's money, with rakes? in doing what God forbids to do? A strange morality, certes! and I know not what passage in the Gospel it is taken from!

Yes, youth must pass, but it must pass, like the whole life, in the practice of virtue, the shunning of evil, and the performance of duty.

The only difference between youth and age is, that youth has more energy and strength, and can thus do good with more zeal, more ardor, and more devotion.

This is how youth should be spent, so as to be pleasing in the sight of God, and of man also; so as to be the preparation for a venerable old age, blessed of God; and to sow that harvest

*The French means something more, and implies: "We must enjoy ourselves while we are young;" but as the the answer turns on the word *pass,* it was necessary to retain it.

which the soul is to reap on the threshold of eternity, when its journey is at an end.

There is no more captivating sight in the world than a holy and spotless youth. Nothing can be more beautiful, or more touching, or more amiable, than a *young* man who is pure, modest, industrious, and faithful to all his duties.

Oh! if young Christians did but know what they are! for no earthly consideration would they forego their glory!

Once lost, it can never return. Repentance is beautiful, but it is not *innocence*.

If youth but *knew!* if age only *could!*

FIFTY-SIXTH OBJECTION.

EXTREME UNCTION KILLS A SICK MAN. IT IS ENOUGH TO FRIGHTEN HIM TO DEATH. THE PRIEST SHOULD NEVER BE SENT FOR WHILE CONSCIOUSNESS REMAINS.

ANSWER. Do you wait till the last moment to call a doctor for a man seriously ill? Not at all; his life is at stake, and you fear to risk it; yet you do not fear to risk his eternal salvation.

That is it: the confessor must be sent for when the patient can no longer confess; the priest must be sent for when his presence is useless! There would be a course more simple yet: not to send for him at all, and to let people die like the dogs.

Is JESUS CHRIST, then, the God of the dead?

Did He send His priests to comfort and help dead corpses?

It would be almost impossible to calculate the number of unfortunate souls which have been lost for ever through this fatal prejudice. It is in vain that each day gives it the lie, and shows the sick and dying, shedding tears of joy and consolation after having received the last Sacraments of the Church; it makes no impression, and whole families calling themselves Christians, seem to enter as it were into a common league against the priest, to hinder him from saving the soul of a father, a mother, a child, or friend, which is about to appear before its God!

When sent for too late to save the departing soul, the priest endeavors to make the relations and friends sensible of the wrong they have done: "Oh, no!" they exclaim, "he was such a good, virtuous man! She was such a worthy woman! He was so regular! She loved her children so much, and was such a good mother. We need have no fears." And perhaps ten or twenty years may have elapsed, during which the unfortunate deceased has lived in forgetfulness of JESUS CHRIST, and in the neglect of the essential duties of a Christian life!

Be very certain of this, the poor dying man is not afraid of the priest! The sight of a priest does not hasten his death! On the contrary, his visit consoles and strengthens him, relieves his mind, and sometimes even his physical condition. Numerous physicians have stated the equally

touching and unexpected results produced by the fulfilment of religious duties among the sick.

A short time since I witnessed an example of this, which I shall never forget. I was sent for to attend a child whom the doctor had given up. The poor mother was prepared for the worst. I gave the poor little thing the last Christian Sacraments, I heard his confession, I gave him the Holy Viaticum as his first communion, or rather, as his last! He held his little hands joined together during this sad and pious ceremony. And when I asked him afterward, if he felt peaceful and happy, he made an effort to summon strength enough to smile, and reply: "Yes, father, very happy." I left him, never expecting to see him again.

The following morning the doctor was surprised to find him still alive. But his surprise increased on examining him more closely. He had no more fever; the symptoms of death had disappeared. He could not understand it.

Three days after, the little fellow, thus brought back to life, was playing with his brother.

Did Extreme Unction here frighten the patient, and cause his death?

Do not be afraid, then, of the priest. When you are seriously ill, send for him at once; and ask for the last consolations of religion. Hold yourself in readiness for whatever may happen, and make your peace with God.

To have had one's passport signed, does not oblige us to start on our journey.

FIFTY-SEVENTH OBJECTION.

I WILL PRACTICE THE DUTIES OF RELIGION SOME DAY, WHEN I AM MORE AT LEISURE. I WILL GO TO CONFESSION BY-AND-BY, ON MY DEATH-BED. CERTAINLY I WILL RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS BEFORE I DIE.

ANSWER. On some future day, you say? Yes, certainly!

Yes, provided that future day is in store for you, and that you have the means of receiving the sacraments at the moment of your death, you mean; but this is *certainly* very doubtful.

How many have said as you do: "To-morrow, some future day," for whom there has been nothing in store but judgment and eternity!

How many have neglected to go to confession when it was quite in their power, who have been unable to do so when they fain would!

You will confess *at your death?* And suppose God were to decree your death before your confession?

"Oh, but," you reply, "God is merciful." True, indeed; and, therefore, He offers you to-day a pardon which you do not deserve.

But He who has promised pardon to the penitent sinner, has not promised to him the morrow.

On the contrary, He has warned him to be ever on the watch, because death will come upon him suddenly. Listen to our Master and Judge: *"Watch ye, therefore. Wherefore be*

you also ready, because at what hour you know not the Son of Man will come, and He will reject the unfaithful servant. Then there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (St. Matthew, chap. xxiv.)

What madness to risk your eternity on a *perhaps!*

A few years ago, a young inmate of the prison de la Roquette, in Paris, only seventeen years old, had refused the fulfil his Easter duties, in spite of the chaplain's exhortations. *All* the others had listened to the priest, this one was the only exception.

"At another time," he replied, "not now, next year; not this year!"

The day after his fruitless visit to the young man, the chaplain was passing along into the infirmary of the prison. On one of the doors he saw the *number* of the young prisoner. He entered, and found him on the bed, asleep and very pale. He called the sister who attended the infirmary, and asked what ailed the new patient. "Nothing serious," she replied; "he complained of headache, perhaps an attack of indigestion." They both re-entered the room; the sister went up to the young man, and spoke to him, but he did not reply. "This young man is not well, sister," said the priest, alarmed, "send for the doctor." In a few minutes the doctor appeared; the patient was found insensible. The doctor felt his pulse; lays his hand on his heart. "Ah! my God!" cried he, with an air of stupefaction.

"What is the matter?" demands the priest. Again the doctor examines the young man.

"What is the matter?" he exclaims. "The matter is that the lad is dead!"

"Dead!" repeated the chaplain, uttering an exclamation of horror, "dead!"

And he regarded, with feelings of unspeakable horror, those half open lips which had so recently refused to receive God, saying, "*At a future time—next year!*"

In the adjacent room, another young prisoner of the same age was lying. The last sacraments had been administered to him a few days previously, and his death was momentarily expected: "Ah!" said he, when he saw the chaplain, "I am happy, my good father! I am hoping to see the merciful God soon, very soon, I hope." And when the chaplain told him that it was yet possible that he might recover. "Ah, do not say so," he said with a smile, "I would much rather die; I might fall again into sin and forget God, were I to be restored to health. I would rather die, so as to behold Paradise!"

That evening, the young man expired gently, mingling with his last sigh the sacred name of JESUS.

Examples of sudden death, entirely unforeseen, occur daily. A short time ago a poor workman, the father of a family, fell from a height of several feet on to the pavement of the rue Vaukirard in Paris; he was taken up quite dead, without having even uttered a cry! But he had listened to the Gospel warning, for he was in the habit of going to confession and receiving the Holy Communion *every week*.

If a like accident were to befall you this night,

would you, do you think, be ready like him, to go into eternity?

More recently, a man was passing along a street in Paris. He tottered and fell. He was immediately surrounded by the passers-by, and carried into a neighboring shop. A doctor was sent for, who examined him, and pronounced that death had been instantaneous, taking place even before he had quite fallen to the ground. The unhappy man was not prepared for death.

After thinking of these and similar cases, can you count upon *the morrow* for insuring your salvation?

After that speak to me of deferring it till a *future day!* After that sleep tranquilly with such a thought as this: "I will *certainly* confess my sins at the hour of death!"

A poor apprentice had made his first communion a few months before the period I am going to speak of. He had made one resolution, but it was with seriousness and sincerity. *"If ever I fall into mortal sin, I will go and confess it before going to sleep the same day."*

This misfortune happened accordingly. It was one Saturday, and it chanced to be very bad weather, and the priest was at some little distance. He said at first, "I will go to confession in a few days." But the promise he had made internally returned to his mind, and something within him said, "Fulfill your promise; go to confession."

He hesitated, however. In the midst of the internal struggle going on in his mind, he knelt down and said an *Ave Maria* to obtain the grace

of knowing God's will. Prayer is the salvation of the soul.

He arose and set off to find the priest.

On his return, he met his god-mother, who inquired of him where he had been; with a joyful countenance he told her, and added that he should now sleep in peace, having been restored to favor with God. His mother was in the habit of letting him sleep a little longer on Sundays than on work-days.

According to custom, therefore, she went to awake him at seven o'clock, by knocking at the door of his little room, and calling to him.

A quarter of an hour later, Paul was still asleep. His mother called him again, and then, impatient at getting no reply, she entered his room: "Come, then, you lazy fellow! It is half-past seven—are you not ashamed?"

She approached her child, who did not stir, took his hand, which was quite cold. Affrighted, she looked at his face, and, uttering a fearful cry, fell to the ground senseless. The boy was dead, and already cold! !

Happy for him that he did not put off till *a future time!* not even till *the morrow!!*

May you who read this be as wise as he, and do as he did!

CONCLUSION.

You see, dear reader, all these answers are dictated by common sense, nothing more. No extraordinary ingenuity of mind, nor any subtle

tricks of rhetoric are employed in them. By merely showing itself, truth is proved.

There exist, no doubt, in the world, many other prejudices against Religion. Errors, like follies, have no limit. Nevertheless, I hope I have collected in this small volume those objections which are most commonly raised.

The remaining ones, I can assure you, are no better founded than those I have noticed. Of whatever kind they may be, they are sophisms, that is to say, specious arguments, which have the appearance of reason and truth, but in reality are weak on one side or the other. There can be no reason opposed to the truth.

If any one of these objections is an obstacle in your path, go, I beg of you, to some good priest (they are not rare or difficult to find, God be thanked), and be assured beforehand of the cordial reception you will meet with from him. Lay open your difficulty to him with all candor; he will show you its easy solution.

Endeavor to become better instructed in all that regards religion; the more we know of it, the more we love it; the more we love it, the more we practice its precepts. Many men attack it because they do not know it. They represent religion to themselves as totally different to what it really is, and, therefore, they think they have very good reason to turn it into ridicule.

I fervently hope that my conversations with you may have been somewhat profitable to your soul. Read over and reflect on those points of our discussion which have chiefly arrested your mind.

May I have been happy enough to have increased in your heart the respect due to faith, the love of virtue, and the zeal for your own salvation! This has been my only aim in writing this little book! I shall then have been laboring for your happiness, and my little book will have been a *good action*.

I ask God for His blessing on it, on you, and on myself. With this, I take leave of you, my dear reader; to meet again, I hope, in Paradise!

FINIS.

LIST OF USEFUL BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS ON THIS AND KINDRED SUBJECTS THESE CAN BE PROCURED THROUGH ANY BOOK DEALER

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS. By Cardinal Gibbons.

CAUSES AND CURE OF UNBELIEF. By Cardinal Gibbons.

IS ONE RELIGION AS GOOD AS ANOTHER? Edited by Father Lambert.

CHURCH AND THE REPUBLIC. By Cardinal Gibbons.

WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS? By Rev. P. J. Danehy.

WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC. By Hon. Henry C. Dillon.
This is an outline of the reasons which led Mr. Dillon, a prominent lawyer of Los Angeles, to become a Catholic.

TREATISE ON THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION. By Rev. P. J. Hanley.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By Rev. R. F. Clarke, S.J.

WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS, AND WHAT SHE TEACHES. By Ernest R. Hull, S.J.

THE BIBLE AND THE REFORMATION. By C. F. B. Allnatt.

THE POPE: HOW FAR DOES HE CONTROL CONSCIENCE? HOW FAR DOES HE INTERFERE WITH CITIZENSHIP? 200 pages.

WHAT CATHOLICS DO NOT BELIEVE. By Most Rev. P. J. Ryan, D.D.
A most eloquent and masterly discourse on the subject of Catholic doctrine. Though specially intended for non-Catholics, it cannot fail to instruct and edify Catholics. In his introduction the Archbishop says: "I have given to this lecture the title, 'What Catholics Do Not Believe,' because its primary object is to remove certain prejudices against the Church founded on what 'we do not believe.' The positive side of the question—what we do really believe on these points—will be found stated in every instance, in replying to objections."

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? By Rev. C. Van de Ven. 23 pages.
Some plain questions and answers about the true religion. A pamphlet very useful to point out to an inquiring mind the way to the Church.

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